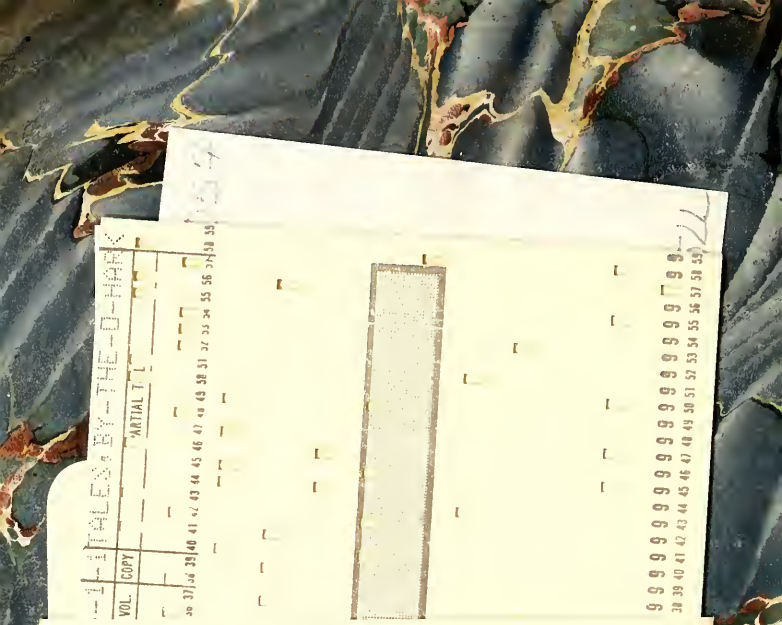

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TALES,

BY THE O'HARA FAMILY:

CONTAINING

CROHOORE OF THE BILL-HOOK,

THE FETCHES, AND JOHN DOE.

rcpl-29-7511

"Quid? ille ubi est Milesius?"

What has become of the Milesian?

TERENCE, *Adelphi*, Act IV. Scene I.

THIRD EDITION.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR W. SIMPKIN AND R. MARSHALL,

STATIONERS'-HALL COURT, LUDGATE-STREET.

1831.

rowful cadence, sung the Keenthechaun, or funeral wail; their gestures, faces and manner, extravagantly affecting the sorrow they were only paid to counterfeit. At times, however, and probably wrought upon by the nature of their subject, they seemed to abandon themselves to all the real frenzy of woe, or melt into its true pathos. The song commenced in praise of the deceased; rehearsed their virtues, their riches; recounted the history of their family connexions, through an endless chain of kindred, and then burst into a wild lament for their untimely and frightful death. When one ceased, another took it up; the whole delivered in the Irish tongue, and in irregular rhyme, composed on the instant; and verse followed verse with surprising volubility.

Through the spacious barn was ranged a concourse of people, listening to the rhapsody, or whispering their comments in that half-tone in which a tale of fear and mystery is always told; and, when the song ceased, an old man arose from his seat near the bodies, and uncovering his gray head, and kneeling, his example was followed by all present, and the united prayers of the assemblage went up for the repose of the souls of their deceased neighbours.

An Irish wake was, at the period we would illustrate, seldom characterized by conduct so becoming the house of death;* generally, however inconsistent and unfeeling it may appear, a wake was the scene of feasting, frolic, and mirth. The old came there to fill their pipes and boxes from the plates of tobacco and snuff laid for that purpose on the dead bodies, and then they got together in knots, smoked, comforted their noses, and indulged their appetite for *shanachus*, a word peculiarly expressive of reverend gossip, when entered into by a pleasant conversational party. The younger part of such an assemblage amused themselves in a manner more conformable to their time of life; small plays were set on foot, under the superintendence of some established droll fellow, there being generally one of the kind in every neighbourhood, who made it his business never to be absent from any wake, seven miles round, who ruled the diversion, and under whose guidance "the boys and girls" carried on their sport, with all that humour and wit for which the Irish peasantry are so deservedly praised, and which, we make bold to say, nowhere exists in such abundant

* Owing to the Roman Catholic clergy the custom is now much discontinued.

perfection. Thus, noisy and careless mirth was the order of the night; and while, in the very chamber of death, nothing, it is admitted, could be more incongruous and unseemly, nothing, meantime, was more common and less thought of.

At the wake of Anthony Dooling and his wife, there was, however, no such exhibition. The general horror excited by the circumstances of their tragical death had power to restrain a custom so universally indulged; and the mournful Keenthechaun, the frequent prayers, and the story of their fate, alone filled up the long and gloomy winter's night.

CHAPTER II.

It was Christmas eve, in the year 17—, that Anthony Dooling and his family were seated round the kitchen fire. He was a substantial farmer, renting a large and fertile tract of land; one of the good old times, who, except his

broad-brimmed felt hat, his buckled shoes for Sundays and market-days, and his brogues for tramping round his farm, wore every thing of his own manufacture. Little money went out, either, for what Tony ate or drank; he killed his cow at Christmas and Easter; he bred his own mutton, his bacon, his fowls; he baked his own bread, brewed his own ale, and altogether was vain of applying to himself the old song,

"I rear my own lamb,
My chickens and ham,
And I shear my own sheep, and I wear it."

Plenty was in his house; he had a ready hand to relieve the poor; and the stranger never turned from his hearth without amply experiencing its hospitality. Yet, with all these perfections, Anthony had his dark side. He was of a violent temper, and would fall into paroxysms of passion with his workmen, and sometimes ill-treat them, for the purpose, it almost seemed, of making it up with them when he became cool, and all was over.

A turf fire blazed in the large open chimney, of which the red light glittered among the bright pewter plates and dishes, and the burnished copper vessels that decked the opposite dresser, and shewed the vast store of bacon hanging

within and without the chimney, at the same time that it lit up the figures and countenances of as merry a group as ever blessed the comforts of a warm fire, after a day's labour.

At one side of the fire, and within the wide canopy of the chimney, in his stationary two-armed chair, one leg crossed above the other, his short pipe rested on his projecting under-lip, which he frequently withdrew in a hurry, to partake of the merry laugh that was passing him—there, and so, sat the master of the house, Anthony Dooling. Opposite to him was the *vanithee*, an orderly, innocent, and even-tempered dame; her character in her face, mild, peaceable and happy; as in a low tone she chaunted the ancient ditty of *Colloch-a-thusa*,* which the busy hum of her spinning-wheel confined within the circumference of her own immediate atmosphere. At one side stood a long deal table, off which master and workmen, mistress and maids, ate their meals, except when a guest of distinction was entertained in the boarded and well-furnished parlour at the back of the kitchen; and in front, appertaining to the table, was a form, occupied at their ease, by five or six workmen, who enjoyed the full

* "Old Hag in the Blanket."

lustre of the merry blaze, and the familiar and venerable jokes of their kind-hearted master.

Among them was Paudge Dermody, whose rustic wit and shrewd tongue, never at rest, but now particularly vigorous, kept the group in a continued roar: and none enjoyed his display more than Chevaun Darlduck, who, in the back-ground, squat on her haunches, was giving the final polish to the pewter, brass, and copper utensils of the dresser, as one by one she took them down, burnished, and again replaced them: the other females of the house had gone to spend Christmas-day with their friends. Chevaun had few personal charms to boast of; in her the old adage, "God fits the back to the burden," was fully exemplified; she wore a bluff face, that neither sun nor storm could affect; arms as red as frost-bitten haws; and altogether was blest with a strong, robust form, well calculated for the drudgery of her employment. She had been brought up by her present mistress, Cauth Dooling, and was highly valued, and not entirely unrewarded; for Chevaun had saved a "little penny," and looked forward to be the possessor, one of those days, of a cabin of her own, an entire acre of ground, a cow, a

pig; and, in her mind's eye, a husband was casually added to the list of comforts.

Chevaun, therefore, had been casting that eye about her for one on whom to bestow her gracious self and accumulated wealth. But the soft cogitations of her pillow, and the steady and sober thoughts that came by day, were at continued variance, and kept her bosom and her choice undecided. At night, when it was allowed to assemble after work, in the kitchen, the humour and brilliancy of Paudge Dermody, his handsome person, and his frolicksome kiss, caused her to forget his idle habits and spendthrift disposition, and sent her to her couch to dream of him and happiness; but then, with the daylight, which routs all fanciful visions, came her observations of the industrious and also talented Andy Houlohan, foster-brother to the lover of her young mistress: Andy could build a house from top to bottom—a weighty consideration with one who had to build a house; he could mend a plough or a car, and boasted various other qualifications of a solid nature; so that, between the showy fascinations of Paudge, and the more valuable acquirements of Andy, her inclinations and her prudence held a sad

conflict; the day constantly effacing the impressions of the night, and the returning night—that time when the softer impulses have their sway—exhibiting Paudge in his glory, and again giving him the full empire of her heart.

The handsome daughter of the old couple had not yet taken her accustomed seat by her mother's side; she was employed, or seemingly employed, in some trivial house-concerns; but conscious expectation appeared in the glances of her eye towards the door, and she frequently paused and started a little, as she tripped across the floor, and bent her head, as if attentively listening. By and by, the latch was lifted, and the cordial smile she gave the new-comer, who entered with the usual salutation of "God save all here," showed he was no unwelcome visitor; and another smile, of a different character, with which she answered his whisper as he passed, told that they pretty well understood each other. In fact, it was Pierce Shea who came in, the son of a neighbouring farmer, and the young girl's betrothed admirer.

Alley Dooling, now about eighteen, was tall and slight in her person, but with a delicate roundness of form, the contrary of bony leanness; her step free and bounding; and her

whole carriage, though it wanted the polished elegance of the drawing-room, possessing that unacquirable grace which perfect symmetry bestows. Her face was oval, her eye soft blue, her cheek blooming in health, exercise, and happiness; and there played about her smiling mouth a disposition to humour, sweet, not extravagant: her shining gold hair, smoothly combed back, shewed the full height of her beautiful forehead, and was confined, the more the pity, in her ample muslin cap. Having been to market with her father, she was still dressed in her holiday clothes; that is to say, her crimson poplin gown, open before, which thus allowed to be seen her fine quilted silk petticoat, partly shaded by a thin muslin apron, and also short enough modestly to shew the undeniable symmetry of her ankle, fitted closely by light blue cotton stockings of her own knitting. Her shoes were decorated with large silver buckles, reaching entirely across the instep.

In the eyes of her lover, Alley had never looked more beautiful than on this evening. He, too, was a fine young fellow, just such a one as we would willingly give Alley for a husband: above the middle size, well formed, with

a handsome and intelligent face, full of the smiles and the fire of youth, the result of a mind at ease, ingenuous, yet bold withal; and there was a manly dash in his bearing that became his years; he was just entering his twenty-first spring.

It might have been said, indeed, that Pierce Shea was, in other respects, a step above Alley. Although her education had not, according to the notions and opportunities of the time, been neglected, his was more perfect; as, at ten years of age, he had left the humble schools in the neighbourhood, for the best polish and acquirement the adjacent city of Kilkenny, apart from its college, could afford. In birth, too, he had a nominal advantage, being the only son of the only son of an old officer, who, about forty years before, retired to the country to assist his half-pay with farming pursuits and industry. Altogether, Pierce was, to the rustic community around, an incomparable person, and, while admiring tongues declared him a match for any lady in the land, evil ones said he looked too low in his serious attentions to Alley. But, to their spite, and our gratification, the youth himself seemed of a different opinion. He had spent, in the house of Anthony Dooling, as much of

his life as he had spent at home; Alley and he were playfellows in infancy; he had helped her to climb the hill after a truant pet-lamb, or placed stepping-stones over the stream, for her convenience; in less childish days they had been taught to dance together; and, later still, at the hurling-match, when Pierce led on the victors of the ground—and few could equal him at any of the manly sports—he thought more of Alley's triumphant smile, and his pride was more elated by it, than by all the huzzaing of his companions, when mounted on their shoulders, and going over, in exultation, the scene of his victory.

The old people, on both sides, were pleased at the prospect of an early union between their children, who therefore tripped on to happiness beneath a serene sky; no storm threatened, no cloud hung over their way; nor did ambition point out a remote goal, and, to keep their minds on the stretch towards unpossessed good, trim it with fanciful excellence; nor vice, in the apparel, and bearing the name of pleasure, entice them along a flowery road to plunge them into a wilderness of thorns, and there, with a laugh, abandon them. They wished no good beyond what they possessed—uninjured health, peace,

plenty, affection returned, and confidence respected; they wished no other, because they did not think of any other.

When to his general salutation, "God save all here," Pierce had received the usual answer, "God save you kindly," and that he had particularly saluted the vanithee, and "the man of the house," he then stood leaning on the back of the old woman's chair, as it occurred to him, that although Alley might be shy of coming to sit next him, if he took his place first, *he* would feel no such squeamishness when she should be seated. And,

"Well, a-vanithee, how goes on every thing with you?" he said, addressing Cauth Dooling.

"Why, in troth, Pierce, à-roon, and praise be to God for it, there's nothing wrong or asthray; if it wasn't that thief of a fox that cum last night, an' out of ten as fine geese as ever you laid an eye on ——"

But here the simple old woman stopt short, as she discovered that Pierce had left her in the middle of her tale of grievance, and taken his place by his comely mistress, who, with a complicated knitting apparatus in hand, was now seated. The mother smiled knowingly, and shook her head.

"Oh, then, musha, it's little he cares about myself or my geese," she whispered, again taking up her old ditty, and plying her wheel with increased industry; and the young couple entertertained each other without farther interruption.

In a little time, a respectful, though resolute hand raised the latch, and Andrew Muldowny, the district piper, made his appearance. The insinuating servility of this man's voice, and the broad sycophancy of his grin, as he gave his salutation, "*Go dthogah diuyh uluig shey-an agus sunus duiv*,"* bespoke his partly mendicant profession, and plainly told, at the same time, his determination to make himself agreeable and delightful, in lieu of the shelter and good cheer of which he made no question. And on he plodded to rightful seat on the spacious hob, with that loitering gait so characteristic of his lounging, lazy life; and as, unbidden, he drew from the immense pouch of his tattered outside coat (especially constructed to hold them) his welcome-making pipes, screwed them together, and gave several squeaking "notes of preparation," he emptied, simultane-

* "God send luck and a plentiful Christmas to all in this place;" generally given shorter, but the piper will, as they say, "make a *croonawn* or song of it."

ously, his budget of gossip and scandal; told of weddings and wakes, of christenings and funerals, broken off matrimonial bargains, and the endless et cetera of rustic tattle; all which, as, in one shape or other, it brought wind to his bag, Andrew was keen in snuffling out, as ever was the primest-nosed hound in coming on his game.

By the time Andrew's anecdotes were exhausted, and his tongue tired, his instrument was happily ready to take his part, and he blew forth his most ravishing strains. The music inspired a general passion for dancing, and the young light hearts did not demur, nor the old ones disapprove; so Pierce led out his Alley, and Paudge Dermody did his best bow to Chevaun Darlduck, by whom he was blushingly accepted, and the dance went on. Old Anthony relished the sport, furnishing himself with a foaming can of his best home-brewed ale, with which he plied the piper, the dancers, and, including the vanithee and himself, the lookers on; and the night wore apace in mirth and jovialty.

There was but one individual present the quick and resolute glance of whose red eye, as it shot from one to another of the dancers,

shewed no sympathy with the happy scene. This was a young man, in the prime of life, as to years, but with little else of the charm of youth about him. An exuberance of bristling, fiery-red hair stared around a head of unusual size; his knobby forehead projected much, and terminated in strongly-marked sinuses, with brows of bushy thickness, the colour of his hair; his eyes fell far into their sockets, and his cheek-bones pushed out proportionably with his forehead, so that the eyes glared as from a recess; then, his cheeks were pale, hollow, and retiring; his nose, of the old Milesian mould, long, broad-backed and hooked; his jaws came unusually forward, which caused his teeth to start out from his face; and his lips, that without much effort never closed on those disagreeable teeth, were large, fleshy, and bloodless, the upper one wearing, in common with his chin, a red beard, just changed from the down of youth to the bristliness of manhood, and as yet unshaven. These features, all large to disproportion, conveyed along with the unpleasantness deformity inspires, the expression of a bold and decided character; and something else besides, which was malignity or mystery, according to the observation or mood of a curious observer.

Had they, together with the enormous head, been placed on the shoulders of a man of large size, they would not, perhaps, have created much extraordinary remark; but attached, in the present instance, to a trunk considerably under the height of even men of low stature, their unnatural disproportion probably heightened their unfavourable expression, and, joined to another cause we shall have occasion to notice, created, among his rustic compeers, a feeling of dislike and dread for their possessor; repelling all freedom, which, by the way, he did not seem anxious to encourage.

Having said this young person was very short in stature, it should be added, that he was not at all deformed. Across his shoulders and breast, indeed, was a breadth that told more for strength than proportion, and his arms were long, and of Herculean sinew; but the lower part of the figure, hips, thighs, and legs, bespoke vigour and elasticity, rather than clumsiness, and it was known that, strange-looking as the creature might be, he could run, leap, or wrestle, with a swiftness and dexterity seldom matched among men of more perfect shape, and more promising appearance.

He took no share in the diversions of the

evening; but seated far back on the hob, so far that the blaze of the fire shone between him and the others, and gave occasion to Paudge Dermody to remark, "that he looked like the ould bouchal* himself in the middle of his own place," he seemed busily employed in whetting a rusty bill-hook, while from under the shade of an old broad-leafed hat,—formerly belonging to Anthony Dooling, that from constant wear had become much wider than at first, and was therefore squeezed with a small hay-rope, causing it to flap in many irregular bends around his face,—the fiery eyes glanced round, and were clandestinely and sternly fixed, now on one, now on another, with a dangerous or hidden meaning.

Anthony Dooling, by frequent applications to the copper can, became, at the long run, as he would himself term it, "suguch;" in Scotch, *fou*; Anglice, approaching to intoxication; and his temper grew consequently irritable. In this mood the grating of the bill-hook against the whet-stone, so much in discord with the harmony of Andrew Muldowny's pipes, offended his ears, and more than once he called out to

* Bouchal, boy,—ould bouchal, old boy;—old Nick.

the operator to stop. Finding himself unheard or unheeded—

"What are you grinding that for?" he asked in angry tone of Crohoore, the name of the person we have just described; but a surly look was the only answer.

"Did you hear me spakin' to you *à vehoon grawna?*"* Anthony went on; and subdued resentment, at the disgraceful and stinging term applied to him, knotted Crohoore's brow as he slowly raised his head to answer.

"What am I grindin' it for? I know, now it's myself you mane," the man replied; "I thought, afore, you were discoorsin' the piper."

"You didn't!" retorted Anthony, springing up in wrath, at the brisk tone of his insignificant cow-boy, "no, you didn't think any such thing, *à vich-na-sthreepeea!*"†

Another savage look was given in exchange for this opprobrious epithet.

"None o' your dog's looks!" continued Tony, replying to it, "take yourself to bed out o' that, since your black heart won't let you share in the innocent diversion."

The vanithee here interfered in a mild, beseeching tone, and said to her husband, "Never

* Ugly wretch. † Son of a jade.

mind him Tony à-roon ; he's doin' no harm, poor crature."

"No harm, woman! arrah, bad end to me, but his black looks 'ud turn the May-day into winter—go to your bed, I say," roared Tony.

Crohoore rose from the hob to go ; he slowly laid the bill-hook where he had been sitting; his brows were knit closer than ever, his teeth clenched, and his eyes rolling.

"And do you hear me, bull-head?" the angry master continued, "don't let it be wid you as it was this morning ; have the cows in the bawn at the first light, or I'll break every bone in your lazy skin."

The dwarf, as he may be called, was passing his harsh master while these words ended, and he fixed the full meaning of his look on Anthony, and said, "That same 'ud be nothing new, for tryin' at laste ; it's an old trick you have."

"What's that you say, there, you *shingawn*,* you?" questioned Tony, his passion raised to the utmost at thought of a saucy answer from a creature so contemptible.

"An' it's well you know I *am* a shingawn, or you wouldn't be so ready with your bone-break-

* Shingawn, a diminutive being.

ing," still retorted Crohoore. This was past enduring.

"Take that for a patthern!" cried Anthony, the moment the speech was uttered, raising his clenched and ponderous hand, and dealing the miserable offender a violent blow with the whole force of his arm. Crohoore spun round and fell; his head, as he went down, striking against a chair so smartly as to draw the blood in some profusion.

The piper stopped suddenly; the dance ceased, and Pierce Shea was the first to raise and support the senseless Crohoore, while Alley, trembling and weeping, gave him a handkerchief to bind the wretch's temples, and staunch the welling blood. Cauth Dooling, with eyes of pity, looked at her husband, fully comprehending his feelings, as he stood the picture of shame, sorrow, and repentance. Indeed the blow had scarcely been given, when, from the bottom of his heart he blamed and hated himself for it; and in his present mood he would have offered half his little wealth as atonement.

Crohoore, suddenly recovering, sprung on his legs, and freed himself from his supporter with a force that made him reel, and a manner that seemed to spurn all obligation; his face

was horribly pale, covered with blood, and every hideous feature rigid in checked passion. Without opening his lips he dropped his head upon his breast, and trying to walk, but staggering, crossed the apartment to an opposite door that opened into a passage, through which he should go to the loft where he slept. While the whole group looked on with wonder and alarm, Anthony called after him, and in a crying voice said, can in hand, "Crohoore, à vich machree, come back an' make it up; dhrink to me, an' be friends."

But there was no reply to this pacific and penitent overture; Crohoore only turned round his ghastly face on his master, as he held the door in his hand, gave him one parting look, and then banged the door after him. That look was afterwards well remembered, and often commented upon.

Anthony set himself down without speaking. He felt a return of dudgeon at the manner in which his advances had been received, and this in some degree served to reconcile his conscience to the cruelty he had been guilty of. But a general damp fell over the whole party, and its effects soon became visible; the workmen silently, or in whispers, withdrew to an out-

house, where they slept, and the now superfluous piper as silently plodded after them. Pierce Shea took his leave, but not without his parting kiss from Alley, and the renewal of an understanding with her and the old people to call for them next morning, at a very early hour, when all were to set off to the chapel for the six o'clock mass, it being the practice throughout Ireland, whenever it can possibly be done, to assemble at devotion before day-break, on the Christmas morning.

CHAPTER III.

At half-past four o'clock the following Christmas morning, Pierce Shea rode into the farmyard of Anthony Dooling, and dismounted at the door where he had lingeringly bidden adieu to Alley on the former night. His stout horse, ready caparisoned for the intended journey to a chapel about three miles distant, was provided

with a pillion, on which his mistress was to be seated. He got the door open, and thence concluded his friends were up and ready to receive him. Some surprise ensued, however, on entering the kitchen, the scene of the last night's festivity, to find no appearance of any person stirring. There were a few decaying embers on the hearth, but, except the feeble light they gave to the immediate spot on which they glimmered, all else was darkness, and a dead silence prevailed.

He became convinced from these appearances that none of his friends, or their servants, had yet arisen, and he was therefore astonished at having found the door open. He groped towards the fire-place, in the hope of finding, what in reality was there, a rushlight, left on the hob over night for the purpose of being lit at the turf embers; on his way his foot struck against something on the floor: he stooped, felt about for it, and took it up. It was a bill-hook. He laid it on the hob, and lighted the candle.

"Heaven protect and save me! What is this?" Pierce now ejaculated, perceiving, by the light of the candle, his hands bloody. He paused a moment to reflect how it could have

occured, and then brought to mind that the bill-hook had felt moist in his grasp. He took it up again; it was besmeared with clotted gore.

A rapid conviction of the frighiful manner in which it had been used darted across his mind. Murder had been committed!—The open door, and the silence that prevailed when he expected to have found his friends ready to set out on their pious journey, were now dreadfully accounted for. The inmates of the once happy house were no more, and the murderers had left the door open at their hurried departure.

A youthful, ardent, and devoted lover, such as Pierce Shea then really was, may picture the state of his thoughts and feelings as he now stood, paralysed with the almost certainty that his adored mistress, his all but wife, had, during the few hours between their last loving kiss and the present moment, been hurried into eternity, and, by the arm of midnight murder, torn from him for ever. The contemplation of deliberate murder, to an innocent mind, and even where one is not personally concerned in the victim's fate, commands a sensation of unmixed horror; but when the slayer's red hand is thrust into a

bosom—hitherto the seat of happiness—to tug away its heart-strings, dreadful and indescribable must be that anguish!

Pierce Shea felt himself sicken, and his head grew dizzy; he staggered, and would have fallen, but that the wall gave timely support. His mind became a chaos; the rich colour fled his cheeks, his teeth chattered, the flesh crept along his bones, and every joint failed, as with eyes starting from their sockets, and his hair bristling on his head, he firmly clutched the candle in one hand, and, by its dim light, stared at the bloody weapon he held in the other. A considerable time elapsed before he could commune with himself, but at last he was able to groan out:—

"In the name of the Saviour, on his own blessed morning, I will see what is the matter;" and he tottered forward with a desperate resolution to know the worst.

We have before mentioned a little boarded parlour, entered from the kitchen, the state room of the farmer's house; this he gained. A door at one side of it opened into Alley's bedchamber, and another at the opposite side into that of the old couple: he rushed through the former, and, panting with terror, approached

Alley's bed. The bed had been lain in, but was now empty. His eye rolled slowly round the room, daring certainty, yet almost sure of lighting on the cold corse of her he loved:—no such object appeared. The clothes she had worn on the preceding night next became a subject of his search; they were not to be seen either. He returned to the bed: there was the mark of a large bloody hand on the sheets. He dashed to the opposite door, burst it in, and in his desperate hurry had nearly fallen over the dead body of Anthony Dooling, that lay on the floor: it was near the threshold, and the old man's blood, running in a stream, had flowed under the door, and trickled over the well-whitened boards of the neat little parlour. Pierce's gaze fixed involuntarily on the remains of his old friend. We should scarce describe the sight: the head and breast was savagely cut and mangled; it was murder in its worst feature.

The terror and anxiety of the lover still predominant, he gave one affrighted glare towards the old people's bed; there Alley might have taken refuge, and there too—the thought could not be followed up! With a convulsed bound he sprang across the room; for, at his first

motion, he found himself slipping on the gory boards. He held the candle over the bed, and there appeared a female form, also lifeless, and presenting marks of the assassin's hand, again too horrible for description. We glance at the object for a moment, only to say that, with the life-stream overflowing the bed, and running down its side, it lay so mangled and deformed as, during a first view, to leave the wretched lover doubtful of its identity. And upon that doubt what feelings came!—but he looked closer, and knew the corse of his Alley's mother. She, herself, was no where visible.

A hope that she might have escaped came brightly over his darkened bosom; and the bare idea had power, even amid the horrors of such a scene, to send a rush of joy about his heart, welcome as would be the sudden springing up of fresh water in the thirsty desert. He uttered a cry of joy; he clapped his hands; he shed tears; and nature relieving herself, and in some degree restoring the tone of his mind and allaying the indescribable state of confusion in which his ideas had been lost, gave him liberty to think.

Buoyed up by this hope, he flew through every other apartment in the house. On his

way along a passage leading from the kitchen to the sleeping-place of the female servants, he was obstructed by another victim. Poor Chevaun Darlduck! alarmed by the shrieks of her old mistress, and rushing to her assistance, perhaps out of a dream the most favourable to Paudge Dermody that ever had occurred, her zeal marked her for the murderer's caution, and she fell a sacrifice to the horrid necessity, that, to conceal the perpetrator of one deed of blood, urges him to shed more.

Arrested, and again chilled by this new object of horror, Pierce remained some time stationary and silent, until his feelings grew into increased apprehension for his mistress, and then he rushed on, and in loud cries pronounced her name. Roused by his voice, the men who slept without ran, half-dressed, to inquire into the cause of the outcry; to their impatient questions he could only answer, that black murder had been committed; while they, more calm than he was, proceeded to investigate the bloody business. Left alone, Pierce, conceiving that Alley might have sought safety at his father's house, it being the nearest, and one in which she would be sure of protection, hastened thither to inquire: perhaps she had shunned the direct way that he came, and chosen a less open

and dangerous one. As he passed out, circumstances that had previously escaped his notice, his mind being absorbed by other emotions, now presented themselves. The corner cupboard that decorated the parlour, and which had been furnished with some substantial plate, appeared open, and rifled of its contents; and the desk, too, in which it was known to Pierce the old man kept his money, lay wrenched asunder, and empty, its papers strewing the ground. After a look at these matters, Pierce mounted his horse, and galloped to his father's.

Meantime the workmen, three in number, and who were Paudge Dermody, Andy Houlohan, Pierce's foster-brother, and Shamus Whelan, went over the house, and saw the scenes and sights we have already described. For some time they scarce spoke to each other, so powerfully did the appearance of the corses of their old master and mistress seize on their minds and feelings. In the heavier woe of that loss, poor Chevaun was almost forgotten; even Paudge seemed entirely occupied, without a thought of his generous admirer, partly, it was supposed, on account of having never felt much flattered, notwithstanding Chevaun's riches, at her preference. After looking on the bodies of the old people, the three men hastened into the kitchen,

as if glad to escape from the immediate presence of such objects; and there, securing the door, huddled together, still in silence, and labouring for breath. At last:

"It is a dhreadful murther," said Andy Houlohan, in a whisper, as, for the first time, his eyes met those of his companions.

"The most frightful ever poor sinner hard of," echoed Shamus Whelan.

"An' it was done wid this bill-hook," said Paudge Dermody, pointing to the weapon where Pierce had dropped it when he left the kitchen to enter the little parlour; "it's their ould blood is on id."

They stooped with the candle to look closer at the instrument of death; white hairs clung to it, and they shrunk back again.

"An' that very same bill-hook Crohoore was whettin' last night," said Shamus.

"Yes, when our poor masther (God rest his sowl!) sthruck him, about id," Paudge rejoined.

"As sure as we live to see this holy mornin," said Andy, "he was sharpenin' it, at that same time, to make it do his bloody work so well."

"The Lord presarve us!" all exclaimed, and crossed themselves. Shamus resumed—

"Right enough, Andy; you guessed right at

the first offer. Do ye think of his look, wid his hand on the dour, when he went away bleedin', last night?"

Again they stared on each other in terrified silence, their manner and looks expressing full conviction that they had fixed the deed on the proper person.

"An' where is Crohoore himself, then?" asked Paudge, the first to start from stupid inaction, and take the necessary steps—"Let us find the murderer!" All proceeded on the search.

They gained the loft where Crohoore usually slept; he was not there, nor had he been in bed. They went through the out-houses, sheds, and stables. There was the red mark of a hand on the stable-door, near the hasp; the door was open, and the best horse gone; and foot-prints appeared in a heap of litter contiguous to the stable, on which it was conjectured the *shingawn* had stood to enable himself to mount the tall horse. These prints exactly corresponded to a pair of old brogues found by his bed side.

Daylight dawned while the men were vainly employed in tracing the murderer; and Pierce Shea returned, accompanied by his father, having got no intelligence of Alley, and still raving

and distracted with apprehensions for her fate. He came up just as the workmen were satisfied that Crohoore was the slayer of the three human beings that lay stiff within the house, and when to this conviction another had been added, and was intimated by Shamus Whelan, the eldest of the three, whose silvered locks gave value to the solemn tone in which the following ejaculation was uttered :—

"Lord look down on you wid eyes of pity, poor Alley Dooling; the *miau** and the *miroch** has come over you in your young days; an' it would be better for you, *mille times*, † to be lyin' stretched an' dead wid them that are within, this mornin' !"

"Then you know about her?" said Pierce. "Where is she? What has become of her?"

"Nothin', for sartin, do we know, Master Pierce, à-roon, only we make up our minds that the father's murtherer is the child's undoer," Shamus answered. The young man groaned aloud.

"Aye, God help you, a-vich, God help you; its a mournful Christmas to you," said all.

No doubt seemed now to exist of the identity of the cruel assassin. The news had spread by

* Sorrow and trouble. † A thousand times.

this time; the neighbours crowded in to gratify, although to shock their eyes with the evidences of the thrilling story; and amongst them came one whose words served to fix upon Crohoore the last crime attributed to him.

He told, that, having been in search of a stray sheep, he was returning home about two hours after midnight, along the road that ran at the foot of the descent on which stood Anthony Dooling's house, and there heard the quick tramp of a horse's feet behind him; and that, surprised at so unusual an occurrence, and frightened, too, on account of the fame of a desperate band of night-robbers then in existence, he had retired under the shade of a ditch to observe the horseman. The frosty moon was bright, and, whilst the rider passed, he recognized the remarkable person and face of Crohoore; and, though the horse went rapidly by, he had opportunity enough to note that, before him, the *shingawn* held with one arm something like a human figure enveloped in dark drapery. The man called after him, but Crohoore, without looking behind, put his horse to full speed, struck into the fields, and distinctly made way up one of the opposite hills, and then descended from view at the other side.

With this clue, Pierce Shea, determined on immediate pursuit. He provided himself with arms; equipped, in like manner, Paudge, Shamus, and his foster-brother Andy; and, mounted on good horses, they set out without loss of time, resolved to persevere to the last till they should have secured the murderer, and rescued Alley, if—and the thought was heart-breaking to poor Pierce—it was not already too late to save her from a fate worse than direst death.

"An' they spent all that day an' night," said the narrator of this tale, the same aged retainer of the family who, at the wake, gave the circumstantial account of his master's death here set down, to a circle of attentive and affrighted hearers, and amongst whom we still suppose him speaking:—

"They spent that day an' night, an' a good part of the next day, among the bogs and mountains, an' they came home as empty-handed as they went out, an' worse, by far; for they brought poor Pierce Shea half dead to his father an' mother, an' he's now lyin' in the hoith of a great faver, ravin' like mad; swearin' that he's up to his knees in poor Tony Doolin's blood, an' callin' to them to take the bruised head out of his sight, and thinkin' he sees his poor Alley

strugglin' wid Crohoore, an' cryin' out to him to save her; so that they're forced to have Andy Houlohan, his own nurse's child, an' another o' the sthrongest they can find, to hould him down in the bed; an' little wonder it is, God help him, that his thoughts should be runnin' on the sight he saw."

The listeners glanced for a moment at the disfigured bodies, and turned their eyes away again in haste.

"I'm tould," continued the old man, "by one o' the boys that went wid Pierce, that they met the cursed *shingawn* on the hills, that Pierce was within arm's length of him, an' that he slipt away like any *sheeog*;* the boy himself was so tired an' kilt, I could'nt get the whole story from him; but to-morrow I'll know all about it. One thing is sartin, they cum home widout tale or tidings of Alley Doolin'; there's no knowin' where Crohoore has hid her, but it's not far away, I'm thinkin'."

"That Crohoore was always a bad sight to me," said an elderly dame, stooping across, looking cautiously around, and whispering as if she feared the walls would hear her. "I never cared to see him crossin' my road; there was

* Sheeog—Fairy.

somethin' not right about him; an' the look of his two eyes wasn't like any other christhen's I ever seen; if you said 'God save you,' to him, he was never the one to give you the civil answer; I couldn't for the life o' me, think well of him, Mickle, à-roon."

"Myself always had the same mind o' the cullaun," rejoined Mickle, or Michael, "since the first hour I ever set eyes on him. I was in the field wid my poor ould master that's gone—rest his sowl!" (bending his head reverently towards the bier) "when he found the unlucky *sheeog* in the thrench; it's the six-acre field at the back o' the haggart; an' Mickle, says the masther to myself, see what God has sent us this morning, as he tuck up the brat at the same time; that mornin' is now twenty an' three years agone, come next shroft,* an' the poor sowl little thought he was goin' to be the provider for his own murtherer, when he spoke the words I tell you; no, I could never bear him sence the the first moment; for when the masther held him in his hands an' looked in his face, tho' I'm sartin sure he was then no more nor eight or nine months born, the thing grinned up at him like a little ould man; an' it came into my head he

* Shrovetide.

belonged to the good people, from that out, tho' I never tould my plain mind to any body, just for fear of what you guess yoursefs."

"Well, à-roon, when Crohoore was only a weeny garçoon, he was too sharp an' knowin' for the ouldest amongst us; an' he never did like the other brats o' boys of his age, but always went mopin' by himself; an', when every sowl was asleep around him, many is the night he passed out in the most lonesome places; sayin' whenever he was missed, an' axed about it, that he only staid up afther the hares an' the rabbits, you know; but it was no sich thing. One time—I'll never forget it as long as I live—I was a little bit hearty,* an', as the douol would have id, he came across my path an' I gave him a kick; to be sure I done it without no raison, but the rest of the boys had a fashion of making him stand out o' the way, an' the liquor, that puts the fool on the best of us, being in my head, I thought I might as well have a bit o' fun as another; so I made the kick at him; but—an' may I die in sin if it isn't the blessed thruth I'm tellin! that very night the one cow I had was fairy-sthruck an', died."

"As sure as the day, Mickle," said Anas-

* Tipsy.

thause Farrel—a little old skeleton of a woman with a cracked, squeaking voice, and one side of her face a dirty purple hue, and the other pale as a corse,—"as sure as the day, what your for for sayin' is only the sartin thruth ; it now comes into my mind that just tin years apast, Crohoore (save us an' keep us!) once brought a cock, an' set him to fight again' my cock, as fine a bird, of a common cock, as ever you seen; well he set them at one another 'till the life was a-most gone from the both ; I cotch him in id, an' gave him a good luggin' ; an' it's now I think of the look *he* gave *me ;* an', as I'm a sinner afore God, that very day myself got the fairy-blast along the side o' my face—the marks is here to this very hour ;" and she held out the side of the face alluded to, that her neighbours might have ocular testimony of Crohoore's supernatural power.

The idea that he was connected with the "good people" had before been no more than an interesting presumption, which it was pleasant occasionally to glance at over the winter's fire-side, but now, under Mickle's guidance, it seemed to seize upon the minds of all his gossiping auditors ; they hustled nearer, took rapid pinches of snuff, or "shoughs" of the pipe,

breathed shorter, lowered their voices, and went on,

"The Lord save us," said one, "isn't it a wonther he didn't get 'the good people' to sthrangle his ould masther and misthress, an' nobody the wiser, becase no marks 'ud be left, an' not go to the throuble of doin' it himself, afther such a manner."

"It's not the laste wonther," rejoined Mickle, who gave the law in fairy lore; "the good people, they say, hav'nt the power to take away a life; they can only spile an' wither a body, entirely, like Anasthause, there, but a death-blow must be struck by some livin' christhen sowl."

"Well, well, that may be as you say it, à-roon," rejoined the former speaker; "but don't you think it the most likely thing for him to have our poor Alley among them?"

"You just guessed my mind; I'd hould a good heiffer, if it war God's will I had the like, that this blessed moment she's in some o' the green raths* they live in; sure well we know they're to be seen in plenty the very road he uck her," answered Mickle.

"An, tell us this, Mickle; you have as good a right to know id as any other in the world, be-

* Little hills.

cause you lived under the same roof wid the both ever sence they were weenuchs; I hard it many a year agone, that Crohoore was dyin' in love wid Alley."

"You hard no more nor the thruth, Maugha; 'twas plain to be seen as the day-light; an' I often was by when poor Tony—rest his sowl! gibed Alley herself about id; tellin' her, as he chucked up her darlin' chin, that if she was a good colleen he would give her Crohoore for a husband; every body laughed at id; but mysef, though I never said a word afore, always thought it 'ud end bad in the long run. Alley, poor crature, was kind an' tinder-hearted, an', while the one and the t'other had their pluck at Crohoore, she never gave him a sour look or angry word; maybe he bewitched her, by Gor; for it was the hoith o' wonther to see her so sweet on sich an ill-come *shingawn* that every body was afeard of; an' as for himself, he never cared to do any thing right that any other body bid him, bud one word from Alley 'ud send him forty miles in the dead o' the night-time.

"It's sartin sure, I'm thinkin', that the news of her goin' to be married to Pierce was one raison for Crohoore's doin' what he done; an' so he whipt her off, an' tuck his revenge at the

same time; for, between oursefs, 'Tony Doolin' was often a hard masther to him; to be sure he well desarved it, for an idle lazy rogue, as he was; bud it's what I'm goin' to say, is this. About a month or so agone, one night, instead of mindin' together the cows, he went off on his own business—you know what I mane—an' Tony found the cows sthrayin' about, an' some time afther met Crohoore comin' over the style into the *haggart*;* so he says no more but gives him a clipe of his stick that tumbles him into the litter; an' it's well I remember Crohoore sayin', when he passed me afther gettin' up, '*ma-horp-an-duoul*;† you'll pay for all this, together!'—an' sure he brought his own black words to pass."

Thus did the gossips run on with their shanachus till the long night wore away. The crowd of people left the wake one by one, as the morning approached; and at length there remained but three or four women, who, with half-shut eyes, and heads drooping and nodding for want of rest, scarcely attended to the melancholy and still-uttered Keenthechaun. The wild song was chaunted by a tall worn woman, with matted locks and a haggard face. She changed

* Part of a farm- yard. † An imprecation.

abruptly from her praises of the deceased into the most dreadful maledictions against their murderer, and then the women were somewhat aroused; but when suddenly starting up, and pausing for a moment, she exclaimed, "See him! he comes to hear my curses, and to look on his work!" they, too, sprang to their feet, and beheld the witch-like poetess, with eyes starting from their sockets, and her skinny arms extended, pointing at a person who stood so close to the corses that his hand touched the old man's head. He was carefully muffled up, and his face turned away, but a second look at the diminutive figure told who he was. A momentary pause of terror ensued; and Crohoore—for it was no other than he—taking advantage of their inaction, flapped his broad-leafed old hat over his face, as if to hide some strong emotion that visibly shook him, and then turning and walking rapidly to the unobstructed door escaped.

The women at last shrieked wildly, and called for assistance; but, when assistance came, the intruder was beyond reach. No one could tell or conjecture how he had entered or approached the house; and, when the women were angrily questioned as to why they had not given timely

alarm, they solemnly and earnestly averred, one and all, that their senses had become paralyzed, fairy-stricken, in fact, by his presence. Anasthause was among them, the most eloquent and impressive of the group, for she declared that, the moment she saw Crohoore, the purple side of her face had grown scorching hot, and the ghastly side "cauld as the clay;" and once more she proffered, in support of her assertions, and to sight and touch, the two-handled face, that looked like an ill-baked cake, burned on one side and left raw on the other.

CHAPTER IV.

On the night of the murder of her father and mother, Alley Dooling was startled from a sleep more than usually profound, the consequence of her exercise of the day and night, by becoming sensible of rough personal violence. When first awakened, she strove to look around her, but her eyes were blindfolded; then she tried to

rise, but a strong hand pressed heavily on her chest, and some person was in the act of squeezing violently round her mouth a tight folded linen cloth; so that not only was she effectually prevented froms creaming, but scarcely could she even breathe. Her arms and ankles, too, were firmly bound, and all struggles to free herself, to speak or give alarm, proved ineffectual.

When the bandage round her mouth had been well secured, the weight on her chest, so far as her bewildered senses could comprehend what was going forward, ceased to inconvenience her, and along with her day-clothes (in which, with an idea of being ready dressed for Pierce Shea's early call, she had lain down), poor Alley was wrapt in the coverlid of the bed, and then lifted up by a powerful arm.

During all this she had heard no voice; short thick breathings, as of one hastily and laboriously employed, alone came against her face; but, as she was raised up, an indistinct curse, grumbled in a low murmur, reached her ear, and she became convinced that she was treated in this ruffian sort by one not of her own sex. Suddenly disturbed in so frightful a manner from her sleep, excess of terror at the discovery

completely overpowered her, and she fainted away.

The cold and pinching blast of the winter's night restored her to animation; but her thoughts continued vague, as if in a terrific dream, and she was just sensible of being borne rapidly along, in the clutch of some person of great strength. The bandage that had been tied across her mouth loosened and fell off for a moment, and she screamed aloud; and suddenly the person who bore her stopped, and it was again fastened on with such increased pressure and violence that Alley's breath and senses again failed her, and she relapsed into a swoon.

When recovered from this second fit, eyes and mouth were both free, all muffling having been removed, her self-possession gradually returned, and she could ascertain her situation. She was on horseback, and a man's arm, from behind, passed round her waist. The frosty air had benumbed her flesh, and tingled even through her bones: her teeth chattered, and every joint shook with weakness, fright, and cold. Fearfully and slowly did she now turn her head to look into the face of her conductor. The moon flared broadly upon that face as her eyes fixed on it, and discovered the hideous features of

Crohoore, deadly pale, distorted with passion, and stained with blood. Only a few inches' space was between them at this dread recognition, and his small red eye shot fire into her blue one during the hasty glance in which it was made.

Shrieking, and sickened at the bottom of her soul, Alley turned away her head. All the hints she had previously received of his dark and savage nature, and all the warnings to keep him at a distance and be on her guard against him, recurred to her affrighted memory, and she gave herself up as utterly lost. She shrunk from the rude clasp of his arm, she writhed, she loathed his touch, his nearness to her, his very existence. She could not bring herself to speak to him, although the speech were for mercy, and although persuasion was her soul's only hope in her present terrible circumstances, and more terrible prospects; so that for some time not a word was uttered between them.

At last, however, the master-impulse humbled every other feeling; and, suddenly truning round, Alley exclaimed:

"In the most holy name, Crohoore, where are we going, and where are you dragging me?"

"You're going to your only home, Alley, where woe and sorrow wait to meet you," he answered.

"What do you mean by that?" she resumed. "Crohoore, as you hope to see the light of the world to come, carry me back to my own home—to my father!"

He remained silent; from what motive, whether through sullennesss or cruelty, or from abstraction of thought, it was impossible to discover. Alley could only repeat her passionate adjuration, to which the dwarf at length replied:

"Alley, Alley, you and myself, this night, are two unfortunate, miserable creatures!" and then he immediately increased the speed of his horse, holding Alley tighter on her seat, and from the swiftness of their course, and her exhausted and agitated state, she could not continue the conversation.

She imagined, however, that she recognized the country on each side as they passed along, and that she was contiguous to her father's house; but even this the speed and her fluttered state of mind rendered doubtful. In a little time they proceeded at a less violent rate, and then Alley thought she heard a voice calling from behind, and she screamed for assistance;

when Crohoore, with much dexterity, holding her on her seat by pressing his elbow against her breast, put his hand on her mouth, and resumed a full gallop.

Dashing from the road into the fields, they had to go over the flat country, and with scarcely slackened pace ascended one of the low chain of hills, which, Alley now perfectly recollected, were situated but about a quarter of a mile from her father's house. Descending on the other side, they rapidly traversed a large extent of wild and dreary bog; again ascended and descended other small hills, and continued for some time their journey among them. It was remarkable with what certainty Crohoore travelled a waste of marsh and mountain so pathless and difficult; his rein was, indeed, now and then tightened in consequence of the difficulty of the footing; but not for a moment was he at a loss to make out the proper and only way through bogs, where a single false step, at one side or the other, would have sunk his horse to the shoulders, and something baffled, if it did not entirely impede his progress.

Alley employed such occasional relaxations of speed in endeavouring to move the pity of her stern guardian; but he persevered in a deep and

unaccountable silence. Once or twice they passed close by a cabin, of which a few were scattered at a distance from each other through those desolate places, scarcely distinguishable in the moonlight, and on account of their similarity of colour, and, indeed, material, from the turf-clamps, tufts of rushes, or barren knolls, by which they were surrounded; and still hoping to bring some person to her relief, Alley, in approaching these wretched hovels, cried out with all her might, Crohoore not now interfering to prevent her. But her cries were unheard; or, if heard, the inmates only crossed themselves, and prayed to be delivered from the unhallowed wanderers of the night.

They had crossed over one range of hills, and they again pressed against another range, of what the inhabitants called mountains, but which were not of sufficient elevation to lay claim to that title; they were however abrupt, fatiguing to ascend, barren and dreary, chequered with heath and furze, and here and there a stunted oak, the relics of the large woods, that about fifty or sixty years before had overspread the district. Through these wilds Crohoore for some time journeyed, and at last, after looking long and carefully around him, suddenly halted,

dismounted, and helped the suffering Alley also to descend from her irksome situation. He placed her on her feet, forgetting that, from cold and fatigue, and misery of mind, as well as from the bonds which tied her ankles, it was impossible she could stand; and so Alley no sooner touched the ground, and was deprived of his support, than she fell prostrate. Instantly he stooped to raise her, and his savage nature seemed touched with pity; for low moanings escaped him, when he saw her tender ankles cut and bleeding from the pressure and friction of the rude cord that bound them. Still on his knees, he hastily undid that cord; then gave liberty to her arms also, and led her a step forward.

Alley, unmindful of every thing but her misfortunes, had not observed that they were at the door of a miserable cabin, at which Crohoore stopped, and, with the butt end of a pistol which he drew from his breast, knocked loudly. There was a long pause, and no answer. He knocked again, still louder, and to his second summons a squeaking, querulous voice sounded from within, asking who was there?

"It is I—Crohoore," he answered; the harsh voice screamed some observation in a dissatisfied

cadence; footsteps were then heard inside, and lights shot through the chinks of a badly-made and half-rotten door, which, after many shakings and creakings, at last half-opened.

From the vision that appeared, Alley drew back in natural terror. She had heard tales, such as all country girls hear, of witches scudding on the blast, and hiding themselves in holes and corners to do deeds of wickedness; and she thought just such a being stood before her. It was a crone much under the middle size of women, and made still lower by an unusual bend in the back, which sent her shoulders and head forward and down, almost to a level with her hips. Her face might seem a parchment mask, loosely adapted to the staring bones, and therefore shrivelled up into innumerable wrinkles, which ran length-ways and cross-ways, and here and there, without union, beginning or end; and of this face the chin came out like a pointed horn, and the mouth, when closed, was but one of the many wrinkles around it; and, when open, shewed bloodless gums, without teeth. Matted grey hairs hung down the cheeks, escaping from an old red handkerchief that entirely covered her head, and was knotted under the stringy throat. The rest of the figure,

with its costume, does not invite description; it was withered skin and bone, foul and disagreeable, with but a few shreds of covering. The only trait about the animate mummy which interested, and to which one would turn again, though not for gratification, was her eyes; and they indeed possessed a strange vivacity, if not energy, unfitted and unnatural to such a carcass.

She held up a lighted rush-light as Crohoore entered, bearing, or rather forcing in his instinctively resisting companion. The beldam viewed them closely, a moment, with half-shut eyes; then the wrinkled lids suddenly expanded, and while her looks, flashing on Crohoore, expressed all the impotent frenzy of age, she squeaked out in the shrillest key,

"Villain o' the world! an' you dared disobey my commands? didn't I warn you, on peril of the hereafter, not to lay hands on Alley Dooling? Ugly *shingawn!*—be your misdeeds on your own head!"

"Whisht, whisht, now, *asthore,*" said Crohoore, hastily, though not angrily; and then he whispered something, a few words only, yet they seemed to convulse his frame through every fibre. The hag whispered in her turn, and his paroxysm gained its height; he started back;

trembled still more violently, grew more deadly pale, and cast a mournful, or, at least, strange glance on the poor terrified Alley. She, eagerly catching at the change that took place in the features of her extraordinary conductor, again tried every appeal to divert him from the infamous intentions she believed he held towards her. Flinging herself on her knees, and using the Irish language, the sound and idiom of which she conceived might have most effect on him,—

"In the name of the God of Heaven, Crohoore," Alley said, "be not to me, the only child of your old master and mistress, the villain you intend to be! think, and repent in time! restore me to my father this blessed Christmas morning, and you shall not only be forgiven, but, I swear by my father's soul, you shall be rewarded!"

During this address Crohoore groaned fearfully, staggered backward, leaned against the damp wall of the wretched hut, spread his hands over his face, and Alley saw, with astonishment and delight, tears of, she hoped, pity and repentance, forcing their way through his fingers, and running along the backs of his hands. "You *will*, Crohoore." she then con-

tinued, clinging to him; "you will take compassion on me, and bring me home again to my poor father?"

But now the wretched girl was, for the first time, to learn the extent of her misery. Crohoore uncovered his face, which horror, grief, despair, and every frightful passion seemed to agitate; then he advanced a few steps, stood over her as she knelt, and with a voice choked, and almost inaudible, said, "Woe, woe be to you, child of the Doolings! and double woe to myself, miserable crature that I am! Alley, Alley, you have no father, you have no mother! —their blood is swimming about them—they are both murthered!"—She gave one piercing shriek, and fell, in strong convulsions, on the wet earthen floor.

When she recovered, she found herself in a different apartment from that where she had fainted, and of which the aspect was entirely new to her; she had never before seen one like it. The walls around were built of solid masonry; and over head, instead of the bare thatch of a cabin, there was a ceiling of some black timber, from the middle of which hung, by a cord, part of an old metal pot, filled with grease, and this fed the flame of a rag that sent

its flickering and lurid beam around the unplastered sides of the ample chamber. In a remote corner stood a dirty deal table, and a few chairs of the commonest kind; and on one of the two squalidly furnished beds, which the place also contained, Alley was lying: it appeared extraordinary, however, that in the midst of shreds and tatters, and vile furniture, the materials of her bed should be feathers, a luxury then almost unusual, even in the houses of the better sort of farmers. The unearthly looking old creature, who had opened the cabin door, was supporting her on the bed as she recovered, and applying strong-smelling plants to her nostrils; and over her stood Crohoore also, his countenance bearing nearly the same expression as when he had spoken the horrible words that deprived Alley of her senses, and that still rung in her ears, and rent her soul. From the aspect and presence of both her companions the poor young girl again shrunk, now with a new cause for aversion and terror, infinitely more powerful than any she had before felt; and in this state we must leave the forlorn Alley, until, in the progress of the story, she again comes before us.

CHAPTER V.

MEANTIME it is our duty to examine into the truth of the account given by old Mickle, at the wake, of the unhappy termination of Pierce Shea's first effort for the recovery of his mistress.

In a frame of mind little short of distraction, he had set out, with his foster-brother, Andy Houlohan, Shamus Whelan (a stout man, rather advanced in years), and Paudge Dermody, the wit (but now grave as the dullest fellow), all well mounted, well armed, and resolute. The day, still young, appeared lowering and cloudy, as they started, and they had to penetrate a dense fog that rested on the summit of the hill, pointed out as that over which Crohoore had made his midnight way. They traversed, all that day, the bleak heights and spreading marshes, of which the entire neighbouring country was composed, inquiring of every person, and exploring every spot likely to give information of, or concealment to the fugitive; but, except in two instances, they found no clue.

The owner of a cabin, that stood on the edge of the most extensive bog they had crossed, told how, during the previous night, he had been scared from sleep, by loud and frightful screams; he little thought, however, that any thing mortal could have traversed the lonesome and treacherous marsh at that untimely hour; and a load was removed from his heart, when he understood what had been going forward, and he no longer feared to have heard the mournful wail of the *bocheentha*, come to predict the sudden death of himself, or of some dear member of his family. The pursuers also met, straying among the hills, the horse that had been taken from Anthony Dooling's stable, half dead with fatigue, and soiled with sweat and mire, still undried upon him.

This scanty information just served to convince them that the object of their pursuit was concealed somewhere in the neighbourhood, but farther they were compelled to take chance as their guide. The party, when night closed in, had emerged from a scattered wood, that for some miles ran along a ridge of hills, and which they had spent a good part of the day in exploring. They paused on the barren descent, and looked around in every direction for

some roof to shelter them; for, with the falling night, wind and rain began to drive in thick gusts over the desolate country, and all persuasions were lost on Pierce to face homeward, until he should have gained some tidings of his Alley, even though she were hid in the bowels of the earth. A black extent of bog lay beyond them, running on, till, in the waning light and growing mist, it seemed to mingle with the horizon. At the bottom of the ridge on which they stood ran a mountain stream, that had its source higher up in the country, among a continuation of the same chain of hills. When crossed by the party, during the early part of the day, this stream appeared no more than a puny gurgling thread of water, spinning about the large rocks that strewed its channel; but the channel itself was ten feet and upwards in depth, and, at the least, from twenty to thirty in breadth, showing that, at times, it became an impetuous torrent. A little to the right of the party, and lower down on the descent of the hill, stood one of those uncouth square castles, so frequent in Kilkenny and some neighbouring counties, built most probably by the English settlers of the Pale and their successors, and which served the double purpose of residences

and fortresses, affording them the sole shelter they could hope to find in the country, and securing them from the irregular attacks of the dispossessed natives, not yet supposed to be reconciled to the growing sway of new masters: we may add, that those castles are built all over the country, in such close succession that the prospect from one to the other is never interrupted—doubtless for the purpose of spreading alarm by fires, or other signals, in case of any of them having been assaulted. After Pierce Shea and his companions had taken a survey of the district around, it appeared that the old castle we have been describing was the only place that offered the sudden shelter, now becoming every moment more necessary. The deepest shade of night had almost fallen; the heavy wreaths left the mountain tops, and floated as clouds before the summoning blast; and the rain, which hitherto had been but a spray, blown upward from the damp valleys, now began to fall in heavy and continued drops. To the castle then, the adventurers hastened, and there established their quarters for the night. A ground-floor of the old building afforded shelter to their horses, and the hills scanty and coarse provender; they brought timber from the wood,

and in the middle story, to which they ascended by the narrow spiral stairs, a blazing fire was soon lighted ; Andy Houlohan, the most provident of the party, displayed a well furnished wallet of country fare; Paudge Dermody, the thirstiest, a big black bottle of brandy ; and all collected round the blaze to partake of refreshment and rest, which, considering the toils and anxieties of the day, were certainly their due.

They soon had to congratulate themselves on these precautions. The wind blew a storm, and dismally howled through the doorless building, agitating the blaze round which they sat, through the slits in the narrow walls, formerly constructed rather with a view to safety than convenience, or as much to serve as loopholes, from which to annoy an enemy, as for windows to admit the light. The rain descended in sheets ; and one of the men, who had ventured out for an instant, reported that it was so pitch dark, he could not see a yard before him. The moon, which was in the wane, would not rise for many hours ; so that, even had they met with no opposition from Pierce Shea, it would have proved impossible to make way homeward through the dreary paths they had to travel, in so gloomy a night. After their repast, the men

felt the influence of the fatigue they had undergone during the day; and in a little time their discourse flattened, and one by one they stretched themselves by the fire, and fell asleep—all but Pierce Shea, the state of whose mind naturally kept him waking. His feelings were in accord with the night and his situation, with the desolated place of refuge, the tempest, the darkness, and the weeping heavens without. He lay down on the earthen floor, but could not close his eyes; he started up, and walked from side to side of the waste apartment; he leaned his back against the wall; he sat in the deep recess of the window; every position was uneasy, because every one was inaction, and away from the purpose in which his soul was engaged. At last with no defined motive, but merely in obedience to the fiery restlessness that swayed him, and perhaps hoping something, he knew not what, Pierce muffled himself in his great-coat, and cautiously descending the narrow stairs, lest he should disturb his companions, sallied out into the night, regardless of its blasts, and of its drenching rain.

A kind of bellow, as if from the castle, startled him; and now hope came in a more certain form, and he rushed in. He looked into the

lower apartment; but could see nothing through the thick darkness; and he heard nothing, except the munching noise of the horses' jaws, as they strove to make way through their hard provender. He rapidly mounted to the place where he had left his companions. The fire was nearly decayed; but light enough still remained to show, that, with the exception of his foster-brother, Andy, the men continued to sleep soundly: and Andy, if not asleep, seemed bewitched. On the spot where Pierce had seen him stretch himself, the man now knelt, the aft part of his large and gaunt person resting on his heels; his head and body thrown back, as if to avoid something he feared would touch him; and his left arm extended at full length, to prevent a too near approach, while, with his right fist desperately clenched, he smote his obviously strong breast-bone, and muttered, with distorted lips, and at race-horse speed, some prayers in the Irish language. He remained unaware of Pierce's entrance, and persevered in his attitude and occupation till the young man approached, and seized his out-stretched arm, calling on him to tell what was the matter.

Andy gave a sudden plunge when his feeler was touched, and in stunning accents roared out

the prayers he had before only mumbled; then, withdrawing his eyes nearer home from the vacuum on which they had been set, he recognised his foster-brother. But this caused no abatement to his orisons, if we except a change in the tone of delivery; Andy continuing at length, and without answering Pierce's question, till he had finished the whole catalogue; and, as it is suspected, he had never burthened his mind with more of any one prayer than by mere force his mother compelled him to learn in infancy, and as, at this time of day, even those scraps were partly forgotten, poor Andy must have made rather an odd jumble when he went to his devotions. Pierce, over and over, repeated his inquiry, and,

"Arrah, then, master Pierce; à-roon, is id yourself?" he at last moaned out, giving, as became his country, question for question, and rising slowly from his knees, while with the tail of his coat he wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"What is the matter, I say?" again asked Pierce.

"Did'nt you see her, à-vich?"

"Her! who?"

"That cursed—och, asy, Andrew? hauld a

guard over your tongue, and mind what you're for sayin'; I mane the blessed body that was here."

"Andy! God send! perhaps you mean Alley?"

"Mostha, but if it war Alley, it wasn't like the Alley we used to see, afore now; but the could grave, it's like enough, has spiled her, for good-an-all."

"What do you mean? would you drive me mad, man? whom *did* you see?"

"Come, Andy," said Paudge, who was awake since the bellow Andy had emitted, when Pierce bore down his arm, and who now drew towards him; "Come, Andy, none o' your auld ways, bud the thing aut, clever and clane, at once."

"Go on!" roared Pierce.

"Wait abit, à-chora, till I think o' myself; arrah, there's no use in talkin'; the very heart in my body, within, is frightened out o' me."

Pierce stamped, "no use!" then, altering his plan, he said, in a chiding tone—"So you will not satisfy me, Andy?" and these words were accompanied by a look of reproach and anxiety that made stronger impression on the tardy Andrew than could the most violent fury.

"Mostha, only gi' me time to scrape my

senses together, ma-hurp-on-duoul!"* — oh, Chrosh-Christha!" and he drew his thumb over his forehead, as, conscience-smitten at his own untimely impiety, he looked around: "we must bar cursin' an' swearin' till we get out o' this, any how; bud if ye war to see what myself seen, you wouldn't spake a word fur this good twelvemonth to come; well, Pierce, à-roon, I'll thry to think iv id, an' don't be lookin' so dushmal: I'd betther begin at the first settin'-out: well: I stretched myself down here afore the fire, an' fell a-sleepin'; whenever it happens that I don't sleep in my own nat'ral bed, Pierce, agra, I always an' ever have some unlooky dhrames; an' so id turned out this time. I thought to myself I seen poor Alley lying on the flure, fornent me, a corpse like, only there was no one to wake her, or keenth her; an' some baste, like a cat, bud as big as a year-ould calf, at his work pickin' out her eyes, an' makin' away wid 'em; an' I dhramed Alley got up, iv a sudd'n, an' came over to me, without walkin', an' never an eye in her head, only the bare sockets; an' then I gives my bawl, as I thought to myself, an' was broad awake in a minute; bud, it's well I wish

* A curse.

I never stopped sleepin' an' dhramin, ever sence, bad as it was to me at that present time.

"When I awoke, sure I thought, at the first goin' off, I was still snorin', an' didn't waken at all, an' I rubbed my eyes hard, wid my knuckles, to make sartin; fur it was then I seen what was enough to kill dead any Christhan cratur—standin' close by you, Shamus." Shamus startled, his flesh began to quiver, and his strong grey hair to stir his old hat; "standin' close by you there was a *thigha*,* fresh cum out o' the ground, fur the windin'-sheet had the clay all over id; her eyes, as red as fire, starin' into mine; an' not the laste like any iv ours, blest be the hearers, bud, for all the world, as if you rammed two red coals into a schull you'd get in a church-yard, or a place of the kind; an' there was nothin' on the fatures iv her, or id, or whatever the duoul—(och! whisht, Andy; an' don't let one of us say the duoul's name again fur the wide world,) nothin' bud the bare bones; myself gave one screech, when she put out her hand, wid the mate scraped as clane from id as any of us could scrape a bone the hungriest day he ever saw; an' then, not a word I could let out; an' she stepped across the fire, an' was for com-

* Ghost.

in' straight upon me, when God put it into my head to bless myself, an' say my prayers; an' faith, the first word was enough fur her; aha! she didn't like that sort o' talk I'm thinkin'—(but that's betuxt oursefs); its little iv id goes far wid'm, where she came from; so, out she druv through that weeny split in the wall as asy as myself ud go out in the dour, beyant; an'—bud, tunther-an'-ouns! (God forgiv' me!) du ye mind *that?*"

On his knees Andy again dropped, and into his old position; and, not forgetting his prayers, extended his arm, and stared in a paroxysm of terror, as if on some object, towards the gloom that pervaded the entrance to the apartment. The others, at once conceiving the cause of this sudden change in his manner, slowly turned round, and saw an object, in whitish drapery, move along the passage leading down the stairs of the building. Pierce Shea was the only one who had sufficient hardihood instantly to follow: the rest stood without motion or word: alone, therefore, he ran forward, and was quickly lost in the darkness without.

This roused the anxiety, if not the courage of Andy, who loudly blubbered forth, "Oh, murther, murther, boys! an' will ye lave him to his

death? Musha, then, won't you do nothin' to help the gorçoon Shamus? Paudge, won't you run afther him? Mille murther! is this the way ye sarve the poor fellow?"

Paudge seemed the most collected of the three; as for old Shamus he looked quite confounded with terror, and could only ask,

"For what ud we go? what good ud the likes iv us do against a *thigha?*"

"Murther!" still cried Andy, "he'll be bet to chaff! och! an' nobody near him to put him in mind iv his prayers! Paudge, won't you go?"

"An' what's the raison you don't go yourself, Andy?" asked Paudge, able to enjoy the frenzy of his more credulous companion, and exert his own natural wish for a joke.

"Its fitter fur him, nor fur us," said Shamus.

"Not a bit," rejoined Paudge. "only he knows the *thigha* has more ill-blood to him than to any other, 'case why, she was listenen' to all he said iv her." Andy groaned an assent.

"But come, boys," Paudge went on; "we'll go altogether, to end disputes,"

"For certain that's the only way," said Andy; bud you, Shamus, agra, you have your prayers betther nor myself or Paudge by far; little blame to you, as you're ould enough to be the

father iv us, an' had the time for id; an' so, Shamus, you'll go first.''

"To be sure he will," said Paudge, "there isn't a man in the parish has 'em so pat, an,' as the *soggarth** says, to your shame an' mine, Andy."

Shamus's mettle was touched in the only susceptible point. On a small scale he played the saint among his friends, with a zeal worthy of a more conspicuous sphere of action; his character was now at stake, and not even the most mortal terror could sway him from keeping it up; so,

"Never say it again," answered Shamus in a laughable effort at a bold tone and manner; and out of the chamber he issued, repeating the Lord's Prayer in Irish, and in a loud voice; Paudge followed, and Andy brought up the rear, from pure apprehension of being left by himself.

They paused at the head of the twisted staircase, and "Whisht!" said Shamus, in an emphatic whisper.

"Go on with the prayers, Shamus, honey," said Andy, very imploringly.

* Priest.

"Come down! come down!" cried Pierce, from the apartment below.

Oh, Veeha-vaugha!"* exclaimed Andy," she has a hould iv him, an' he won't have a bone left!" and all at once abandoning his personal fears, in his strong love for his foster-brother, he ran forward, jostling the others aside, and continued with such impetuosity that he tumbled nearly from the top to the bottom of the stairs. But, though severely bruised, Andy was on his legs in a moment, loudly vociferating,

"Pierce Shea!—Pierce Shea, à-chorra!"

"Here I am, Andy," answered Pierce, much nearer to Andy than he had imagined, who started back, and shouted still louder, at the sudden and close sound of his voice.

"But are you dead or alive, à-vourneen?" he continued, recovering his senses.

"I'm no worse than I was, Andy."

"Are you sure you're not spiled, entirely, a-cuishla-ma-chree?" groping about in the impenetrable darkness, then coming in contact with Pierce, and feeling him all over.

"An' didn't the thigha give you never a sthuch, or bate you, at-all-at-all?"

* Virgin-mother.

"I told you before, Andy, I have met no hurt nor harm."

"Musha, then, God speed her; bud"—lowering his voice, and feeling for Pierce's ear, which he held while he whispered into it, "bud I hope she's gone, for-good-an'-all?"

"She's in this room, whatever she is;"—Pierce stood at the door of an inner apartment.

"Och, presarve us!—hadn't we betther lave her her own way, à-vich?" the other men now bobbed up against him; he had not heard their approach, the wind howled so loudly; and,

"Murther!—who's that?" he bawled out.

"It's only myself, Andy," answered Paudge.

"You must go back, Andy," resumed Pierce, "and get me a lighted stick from the fire; I'll search this place."

"Oh, then, Pierce, agra, don't think iv sich a thing, if you have a regard for me."

"Or," continued Pierce, "you three guard the door where I now stand, and I'll be down to you in a minute." He re-ascended the stairs.

"He's for ruinin' himself!" exclaimed Andy, then in confidential whisper to the others—

"An', boys, wouldn't we be the three greatest *omadhauns** in the world to be stoppin' any honest thigha that manes us no harm?"

* Naturals.

His companions silently assented, and all withdrew towards the stairs, leaving unobstructed the passage through the outward door. There was a rustle; they elbowed each other, Andy scarcely able to keep in his voice; and a moment after they saw distinctly the much-dreaded thigha make her exit through the open door into the moonshine abroad, which had just begun to struggle to the earth through the thick clouds and drizzling rain, and of which they were the more sensible, as it formed so strong a contrast with the intense darkness in the apartment.

"Paudge! did you see any thing?" asked Andy.

"For sartin I did, Andy."

"Shamus, did you?"

"Oh, oh!" moaned Shamus.

"It's nigh-hand mornin'," Andy continued, "and she can't come back, plaise God."

"I hope not, blessed be his holy name," said Shamus.

"An' wasn't id a great good loock we warn't in her road, Shamus? she'd cripple us for ever. Bud boys, fur your lifes, don't tell poor Pierce a word iv her goin' out; he'd be thrapsin' afther her thro' the rain an' wind, an' get his killin'; little duv we know where she'd entice him, or if

we'd ever see his face again; don't let on we seen her at all."

"You spake raison," they replied,

Pierce's foot was now heard descending; and he found his valiant men on their post. In his hand he bore a brand from the fire, but it emitted no flame, and of course gave no light. He entered the dark inner room, followed by the others, with their newly acquired courage, derived from the certainty of having nothing to fear. Blowing with his breath, he endeavoured to create a glare; the brand flickered a little, but not enough to enable him to distinguish any object, and he gave up the task.

"We have no more wood to light a new fire," said Pierce, "but here will we watch till morning dawns;" and all expostulation was useless to turn him from his purpose.

The "tardy-gaited night" wore away, and the dull and cheerless beams of a damp winter's morning slowly crept over the drooping scene without. But the light brought to Pierce's mind no elucidation of the mystery of the darkness; he searched and searched, and had his labour for his pains, the men closely keeping their own secret.

He ordered them to prepare for a renewed

journey after Crohoore and Alley, resolving to spend this day even more assiduously than the former one, as his spirit was lashed almost to madness at the thought of the fruitless lapse of time since his mistress had been torn from him. The men engaged themselves with the horses, and Pierce walked out to view the promise of the morning. He had been but a few minutes gone, when they heard a loud shout, some distance from the castle; they hurried out to learn the cause.

Pierce was flying down the descent of the hill, like the eagle sweeping on his quarry, and at some distance before, peculiarly distinguishable by his shuffling movement, yet at the top of man's utmost speed, darted forward Crohoore the murderer. He had the skirt of his heavy outside coat slung across one arm, and in the other hand he held a short gun.

"There they are, at it, after all! there they are!" the men exclaimed, pausing almost at the first step that commanded a view of the fierce race; and, indeed, the distance between them and the contenders rendered useless any immediate attempt at approach; for the contest must have been ended before they could come up to either. At least so they seemed to think; or else consternation at the sudden occurrence

overpowered their senses, and fixed them to the spot.

"Run, run, Crohoore-na-bilhoge!" exclaimed Andy, clapping his hands, "for the swiftest foot in Clarah is afther you!"—

"An run your best too, Pierce Shea!" echoed Paudge, "for your mother's son never had such a match before him!"

"He *does* run his best," shouted old Shamus, "an' cannot gain an inch on the *sheeog!*"

"Dar-a-christh! no! but he loses many!" rejoined Paudge.

"The hill-wather, sent down by the night's hard rain, is now afore 'em both, and that must end id!"—Andy went on with increased energy;—"The banks are brim-full!—see how it tears along, over stone and rock, a good eight yards across!—mort'l man can't clear it!—Aye, Pierce, agra, there you'll have him!—run, run, an' don't give him the turn to the bridge!—ma bouchal you war! run!—dar Dieu! bud it's a wicked race between them!"—

Here all the men at last set forward to the scene of struggle: Paudge crying out as he bounded along—

"Hould him there now, master Pierce, an' we'll tie him well for you!"—

The fugitive had gained the verge of the

boiling torrent; he paused a second, gave a glance behind, to measure his distance from his pursuer; pitched over his gun, flung off his outside coat, and drew back some yards for a run. This delay brought Pierce Shea within a few feet of his game; panting, and already anticipating a seizure, his arm was extended; his fingers touched Crohoore's shoulder; he shouted out, when the pursued flew forward, again won the brink, bounded from it like a bird, and cleared the dangerous water. Pierce was at its edge as Crohoore's feet lightly landed on the other side; he did not hesitate, but also drew back, ran, made the spring, fell headlong in, and was swept away with resistless fury.

The men behind cried out in terror and anguish. Crohoore had wheeled round after his leap, as if conscious of his safety, and saw his pursuer whelmed in the roaring torrent. Instantly he ran with its course. The young man disappeared, rose again, flung his arms convulsively about, gave a piteous and despairing cry; and once more the muddy wave rolled, shrieking as if in triumph, over him. Crohoore gained, still running, a spot where, at his side, the wild stream struck and eddied against the bank; and there he stopped, his eye firmly watching the waters, and his gun pointed.

Again the men called out, and Andy Houlohan, in a key above the rest, exclaimed,

"May my sowl never see glory, but he'll shoot him when he rises!"—and, on the word, Andy covered Crohoore with a pistol, and pulled the trigger. The flint only struck fire. Crohoore, though he must have been aware of Andy's movement, did not notice it; but still stood fixedly on the watch; and there was no time to aim another pistol at him, when the drowning man, whirled violently by the current came thump, against the bank, and a second time rose to the surface. Crohoore, on his knee, in an instant, reached out the gun, stopped, and wheeled him in to the eddy, from the fury of the stream, and, then seizing Pierce by the hair, drew him up, to all appearance gone for ever.

But, placing the helpless head on his knee, and letting it hang downwards, Crohoore shook him, till the water rushed out of his mouth and nose, and a heavy moan bespoke returning life; then he rubbed his temples and his hands; placed him sitting with his back against a thick and high tuft of rushes, and deliberately advanced to the verge of the water, as if to speak with the men at the other side. They, utterly surprised and confounded, shrunk, al-

though the wide torrent was between, a few steps backward; they knew not what to think; they had expected to see him do another murder.

Crohoore addressed them.

"For what stop ye there?—Speed your ways round by the bridge, an' never mind the leap; *I* can't stop *here*, an' Pierce Shea wants a hand to help him;" and he turned to go away.

"Stand your ground, Crohoore!"—said Andy, who, now that no *thigha* was in question, might be called a brave fellow;—"stand your ground!—or, budge an inch, this way or that, an' I'll send the contents o' this through your body!"—and he presented a musquet.

Crohoore paused a moment, his face turned to them, and smiled in savage scorn and indifference; when he moved again, Andy's gun, and two pistols held by Paudge and Shamus, were snapped at him; but only snapped, for, as in the former case, the powder did not even blaze in the pans. He, a second time, faced round, however, pushed the hat from his eyes, and approached as near as the water would let him.

"You're just a set of *sprissauns*,"* he said; "do you think I'd stop where I am, if I had

* Silly fellows.

any fear your guns could do me harm?—the life o' one o' ye is now in my hands, if I had a mind to take it;" and, to confirm his words, he fired his piece into the air, deliberately reloaded, and while so employed added,

"Do as I bid you; bring the gorçoon where he can have heat and comfort, or his death be on your heads, not mine:" and Crohoore finally turned away, walked leisurely over the bog, and, crossing a near eminence to the left, was lost to their view, long before the men, though they ran almost as soon as he moved, had gained the rustic bridge which, at a considerable distance up the stream, gave safe passage to the other side.

Pierce Shea was conveyed home, in a very exhausted state. The torture of his mind and the sufferings of his body brought on, as the old chronicler at the wake had truly related, a bad fever; when past danger, his recovery was slow, owing to his impatience to be well; and two months elapsed before he was able to renew the search for his mistress.

CHAPTER VI.

But while Pierce himself was rendered incapable of pursuing the ravisher of his mistress, a substitute appeared in the person of one from whom no such zeal or friendship could have naturally been expected.

Jack Doran was the son of an opulent gentleman farmer, who lived two miles nearer to the city of Kilkenny than Ned Shea, Pierce's father, or Tony Dooling. His sire we may call a profligate old fellow: he had never married, and, of his many offspring, all were illegitimate. Reared up without a mother's care, and with the loose example of his father before his eyes, it is not to be wondered that Jack lacked morals: accordingly, he was known as a dashing fellow; to use the local idiom, "a tatterin', tearin' fellow;" dressing well; doing what he liked; riding a great active horse; and the altogether of his appearance and figure a medium between the blood of the neighbouring town and the rustic *boulamskeech*,* whose glory was gathered

* *Boulamskeech.*—Some perversion now prevails of the use

by fighting at fairs and patterns, and drinking inordinate potations of bad beer, in hedge ale-houses. Not that Jack himself did not now and, then condescend to eclipse at a pattern; and then, happy and envied was the girl who had him for a dance; though, it is added, he often left her cause to rue her vanity. Wherever he was, he would be king: and king he was acknowledged to be, even in title; Rhiah Doran, or King Doran, being generally one of his appellations. Then, although no vulgar fighter, Jack could command, at pleasure, all the fighting "boys," that is, the most wicked or troublesome fellows in the barony; and absolute reign he had, just as he wished it; none dared say him nay; for treason to Rhiah Dorah begat a broken head. In person he was robust and well formed; but with features hard and harsh, and disagreeable to look at. From his father he had plenty to spend, without doing any thing for it, as indeed, on the same easy terms, had his numerous brothers and half-brothers: none of them ever attending, in any way, to the old gentleman's extensive and profitable farms, from one end of the year to the other. How that

of this word. Its ancient meaning was fine—*shield-striker;* its present we have glanced at above.

liberal giver, as well as begetter, contrived to keep all this glory up, in his own person, for he lived as gaily and as idly as any of his offspring, and in their persons too, appeared to many, notwithstanding his considerable land profits, rather surprising. He and they evidently lived above his ostensible means; yet nor he nor they owed a shilling so any one; and head-rents were duly settled, tithe-proctors and tax-gatherers defied, and the old sinner and his brood paid their way, right and left, as they went along, in a dashing hand-gallop to—the devil. He had a hidden mine of wealth, it was said; he had found a downright pot, choke-full of money: and the story was differently told; but thus by himself:

Passing by a monastic ruin, in a neighbouring town, one moonshine night, or morning rather, the old gentleman heard voices within in earnest conversation. The singularity of such a circumstance made him stop. He stole softly to the building, peeped in, and saw three men busily employed in digging the rubbish. They wrought hard, and not in silence; and from their conversation he could discover they were digging for nothing more or less than a huge pot of gold, which one of them had three times

dreamt was buried in that very place. Suddenly they stopped; and—

"God save our sowls," said the smallest of the three, "here's something hollow under my spade." "Clear the earth away, quick," said another; and they then stooped into the hole they had made, and with much puffiing and blowing lifted up something, and were just about to place it on the ground,—

"When," quoth old Mr. Doran, "a loud screech came from the hole, and then a flash of lightning, and away the three ran, laving spade, and pick-ax, and every thing, behind 'em; the cowardly thiefs, that had'nt the courage to stay a moment, and be rich men; for the blessed name, mentioned by one of 'em, banished the spirit of the person that put all the money there, and, till that moment, had been watching it; and he was flying off before their faces, when they cut and ran. I could do no less than step in after them, and take care of the pot; it was too heavy to carry home with me; so I only hid it out of the way, for that time; and many's the night after it cost me to remove it, little by little, to my own house."

From this source, then, it would appear, the

old gentleman continued easily to feed his own and his sons' extravagance; turning to a spend-thrift account that which might have been better employed, if, as he himself candidly expressed it, the original finders had just had the heart to brave the spirit's scream for the loss of his treasure.

Now, Jack Doran, or Rhiah Doran, eldest son and hope, by the way, of this lucky old night-walker, once danced with Alley Dooling at a wedding, and became desperately enamoured. Her then almost childish vanity was pleased at this well turned flattery, and, not weighing consequences, she foolishly coquetted with him. Jack, though a constant declaimer against the shackled state, vouchsafed, after some hard conflicts with himself, to ask her of her father; but, notwithstanding the honour intended, his reception was none of the best. Old Tony fell into an unseemly passion; turned him from the door by the shoulders; reproached him with his birth; set the dogs at his heels, and commanded him "never to cross the threshold again, as long as his name was Jack Doran." But, worse than all this, Jack got a glimpse of his fair tormentor, while thus enduring for her sake, and she seemed to enjoy his

disgrace; he saw her titter and point at him, and then, with mock gravity, make him a parting adieu.

No matter; Rhiah Doran was not so easily to be put off, in such a way. He summoned his liege men, and had recourse to a method then in almost daily practice, and even at this day of frequent occurrence; he watched his opportunity; made a forced *enlevé*; and, at the head of his bravos, took Alley by force from her father's house.

It was the harvest season, and Pierce Shea had been to Kilkenny to hire a number of reapers, who at that season always repair in swarms to the streets of large towns, awaiting bidders: and he was returning home with them, when the screams of a woman drew his notice, and Jack Doran came forward surrounded by his myrmidons, bearing Alley before him on horseback. Her well-known voice called on Pierce for aid. He sprung to her, seized the horse by the bridle, dragged Jack from the saddle, and Alley fell into his gallant arms. Then rose the storm of battle. Pierce seizing a sickle from one of his followers, and with Alley hanging on one arm, bravely defended himself with the other; his reapers manfully assisted

him; every sickle was unslung; and they fought as "reapers descended to the harvest of death," rather than to the cutting of the peaceful crops that awaited their gathering.

But they were inferior in numbers, as also in desperation, to Doran's party, and, we may add, in arms, and the arts of using them: for the murderous alpeens, wielded by the most experienced hands, and blithe and ready for just such a field, came down on every side. Victory seemed to declare for Jack; who now, watching his time, aimed a crushing blow at Pierce, still encumbered by his senseless charge. The young man partly broke its force with his sickle, but it nevertheless wounded him severely in the temple; and in return he gave his assaulter a frightful gash, that laid the cheek open from eye to jaw; tauntingly remarking, at the same time, that he thus bestowed on him a mark that, one day or other, would help to hang him.

In this doubtful state of the battle, a timely reinforcement, headed by old Tony Dooling, and his neighbour, old Ned Shea, came up; and Doran and his army were driven from the field, and Alley borne home in triumph by her lover; both covered with blood; he, with his own and Rhia Doran's, and she with the warm

stream that flowed from his temples.—This adventure extinguished altogether Alley's desire for extensive conquests, and her undivided heart was gratefully given to her wounded champion and preserver. During his cure she was his attendant, and dressed his wound with her own pretty hands; but her soft smile, her tearful eye, and perhaps the honey of her lip—but of this one cannot be positive, as young maidens scarcely ever wish for more than one witness on such occasions—tended more to his recovery than all the salvos and cataplasms made up by all the old doctresses in the parish; though many there were of great celebrity as rural *médécins* in the neighbourhood.

At the time of our history, such an outrage as that perpetrated by Jack Doran was looked upon more as a chivalrous exploit, deserving a degree of praise for the danger to be run and the courage and boldness necessary in the execution, than as a breach of the law, subjecting the doers to the law's most awful punishment: we question if, to this moment, the technical, "abduction," has any meaning or translation among even the second or third generations of the same people. Anthony Dooling took, therefore, no legal notice of the transaction, thinking

that the ill success of the enterprize, and the ugly wound inflicted on the principal actor, were a sufficient visitation.

This affair took place in the harvest before the opening of the story, and is here related, in order that the following dialogue may be understood. The speakers were old Ned Shea and Jack Doran; the scene in Shea's house; the accompaniment a huge jug of strong ale, home-brewed, of course, and then the only common drink of those who could not every day afford wine.

"Give me your hand, Jack; *Dhar law ma chordius chreete!** but I'll have a hearty shake at it; a good right you have to be the bitter enemy of all belonging to Tony Dooling—rest his sowl!—and to me and mine, and where's the man but yourself ud be the friend instead of the foe?—My notion of you always was that you were a scatter-brain-o'-the-divil, a raking, rolloking fool of a fellow, but with the heart in the right place, and that makes up for all: I had a drop o' the same blood in me, myself, once upon a time, as every body knows."

"For what should I keep up my ill-will,

* "*By the hand of my gossip!*" a common asseveration among the old folk.

Ned? Poor Tony used me badly, to be sure; but he's now in his grave; and we hold no malice to the dead. As to Pierce, poor fellow, he did no more to me than I'd have done myself to him, had I met him on the same spot, running away with my *colleen** from me: and the reaping he gave me," holding up his finger to his seamed cheek, which had considerably drawn the muscles of the mouth at that side of the face, and now, when he assumed a careless grin, to suit his careless words, gave a twisted and rather hideous expression to the seat of risibility—"why, it was only to say, 'thank you kindly, Jack,' for what I lent him, a minute before. I was doting foolish about Alley, Ned, at that time; and am no ways backward to say I have a hankering regard for her, to this day; but I didn't know that herself and Pierce were contracted, or I'd have run my hand into the fire, rather than do what I did. I thought she had no great dislike to my ugly face—it wasn't so ugly, then, as it is now, you know"—and he grinned again, in such sort that, though it must have been meant to make a good impression, old Ned felt uneasy and queerish, and shifted himself on his chair—"and I thought Tony—

* *Colleen*, young lass.

rest his sowl!—the only bar between us. But all's past and gone, and forgot, and forgiven; and I'll show her and Pierce that I love them both still, as I told you before; for I'll turn the country upside-down to give her to the boy of her heart: 'bad end to me but I will!"

"Och! never fear you, *ma bouchal!* and it's your own self can do it!" exclaimed Ned Shea, again clasping the hand of his guest.

"Yes, Ned; I make bold to say there's not that other man in the country able to hunt her out so soon as myself; 'the boys' are ready to go thro' fire and water at the turn of my hand, and we have them far and near, at a pinch; and it must go hard if that limb-o'-the-divil, Crohoore, can hold out against me, when once I set about ferretting him; which I *will* do, day and night, from this blessed moment,"

"*Slaun-tha-guth*, Jack! I hope poor Pierce will live to give you the thanks you deserve; but the gorçoon is in a bad way now Jack;" the old man let a tear drop into his cup;—"I pray God to lave me my only child; but, living or dead, he'll never be the same to me if Alley is gone from us, or, what's worse, a ruined crature: come, Jack, here's long life and prospe-

rity to you, and may you have the present wish of your heart!"—

"Thank you, thank you, Ned; and now fill again." He stood up and raised his glass, while he slowly said—"A speedy up-rise to Pierce, and, when he recovers, may he get Alley from my hand just as I'd like to give her!"—

They both gulped down the toast, holding each other's hand; and, as he resumed his seat, Jack gave the old man's an additional squeeze of great vehemence, while he exclaimed—

"Ruin to my soul, Ned Shea, but that *is* the present wish of my heart."

Who and of what kind were "the boys," upon whose assistance Doran so confidently reckoned, now seems an inquiry of some weight and interest.

The time of our story is placed in that period when white-boyism first began to appear in Ireland. Labouring under the excessive penal code then in almost full operation, though since partly repealed, and excluded by one of its enactments from even an opportunity to become educated, and so gain an enlightened, or at least temperate view of their own situation, the

Irish peasantry, neglected, galled, and hard-driven, in poverty, bitterness, and ignorance, without competent advisers, without leaders a step above themselves, and scarcely with an object, wildly endeavoured to wreak vengeance upon, rather than obtain redress from, the local agents of some of the most immediate hardships that maddened them. First of all, there was, doubtless, a religious frenzy to urge them on. They saw their creed denounced, their form of worship, under heavy penalties, interdicted, and they knew that some years before their priests had been hunted like foxes, and forced to hide in caves and other places of concealment, from the keen scent and vengeance of the most insignificant professors of the rival religion, who, with impunity, took arms in their hands to enforce the rigid letter of an almost exterminating law, still to their knowledge unrepealed. ' In the very district in which the scene of our tale is laid,—and the anecdote is put forward as one laying claim to strict belief,—a rustic congregation had once assembled, with their priest, in the open air, to perform their devotions, when three or four mean mechanics of the other profession appeared, with guns in their hands, fired among the crowd, killed some, and wounded

the clergyman, as, like the Scotch covenanter of old, he preached to his flock in the wilderness.

Such occurrences operating upon the mind of the wretched and uneducated peasant, who had not intellect or patience to weigh logical distinctions, begot a hatred to the opposite creed, as rancorous as it was whole and entire; he hated it because it was the privileged one; because his own was persecuted; because he attributed to its spirit the civil excommunication against him and his priests, and even the petty and gratuitous annoyances he suffered from its lowest professors. And in such a state of feeling he found himself, while already ground down by unnatural rack-rents, compelled to contribute to the support, in splendour and superiority, of that very rival church: in fact, to pay to its ministers the hard-earned pittance he could not afford to his own: and this view of his situation first helped to make the Irish peasant a white-boy.

But perhaps the exquisite tyranny of the merciless being, into whose hands the collection of tithes had fallen, gave the immediate spur to his headlong, and often savage course: and, with this supposition, Peery Clancy, tithe-proctor,

at the era of our history, for the parish of Clarah, stands at once before us.

Having failed in every speculation of early life, and become old without credit to himself; having been twice in jail, once for debt and once for sheep-stealing, Peery Clancy, at fifty years of age, blazed forth a tithe-proctor. He was a waddling, lively old fellow, with a curious struggle of expression in his hard features, and a queer jumble in his manners. The stern bully was on his pursed brow and in his clenched teeth; but, when you looked fixedly at him, there appeared, in his rambling eye, a shuffling consciousness that he had not earned your good opinion, as well as in the general wincing and uneasiness of his person, particularly in the awkward rising and falling, and see-sawing of his arm, as he spoke to you, something like the fidgets of a shame-faced child, that often dreaded and deserved a whipping. A certain air of purse-pride ran, meantime, through all this: and, once in his presence, you would disagreeably feel he was a man who, however aware he might be of the contempt of the world, possessed, in spite of obloquy, or even of the threat and danger to which he stood exposed, reso-

lution of character to act his part without flinching.

His clothes, of good texture, were made half after the country fashion, half after the town; he wore his hat hangingly, with the fur brushed the wrong way, to convince, at a look, that it was superior to the common felt vulgarly worn; and his many-coloured silk handkerchief, his coat of good broad-cloth, composed of as much material as would make two of your modern cut, and his kerseymere small clothes and leggings, really gave him the look of wealth and superiority.

His speech was made up of rude assertion and frightful oaths; and when among those who should bow to his predominance, and tolerate his insolence, full of obscene jests and fat humour, little becoming his grey hairs. Before the last change of profession, Peery had been as bare as Job in his worst day; now, however, his coffers were strong, and he could command a round thousand.

A round thousand, earned, principally, by squeezing from the very, very poorest their last acid shilling: *they* were his best profit; his fat of the land, his milk and honey. Such as could

at once afford to pay his exorbitant demands, did so, no matter how unwillingly, and got rid of him; but the wretched being, who, from the rising of the sun till many hours after his setting, was bent beneath the first malediction of heaven, yet gained thereby but a scanty supply of the meanest food, rags for his covering, and despair for an inmate (among many others) of the hovel, that did not keep off the inclemency of the weather—this was the prey Peery contrived to gripe; and the gripe never relaxed till he had crushed his victim.

He called for his tithe. Perhaps the time was not auspicious to dispose of the little crop, or perhaps it was not matured; any cause, no matter what, Dermid could not pay him; and Peery, as an indulgence, suggested a note of hand. If Dermid could write his name, the bill was executed in form; if not, after many bungling attempts to feel or hold the pen in his horny fingers, he set his mark to it. Time wore on; the bill became due; but the amount was still not in the way, and Peery vouchsafed some of his rude jests to the daughter or wife, which, though they made them blush, were taken as a mark of goodwill by Dermid, who, forcing himself to laugh, handed a douceur, and the

note of hand was renewed. Meantime the crop had been unprofitable, or the landlord had seized it for his rent; and from the unexpected smallness of the receipts, or the law costs attending the seizure, to say nothing of various other casualties, there is no provision to meet the assiduous Peery, who again makes his appearance. Dermid sells some of his potatoes; and, by stinting himself and his family of even this miserable and only food, he gives another douceur. When payment is a third time demanded, he is worse off than ever; Peery sees the state of affairs; he begins to scowl; and thunders out, by J—— and by the Holy G—— that-he-must-be-paid; and abruptly departs to put his threat into execution.

The demand may not exceed—how much will the affluent or easy reader think?—one pound. Peery issues what is called a citation to the ecclesiastical courts; this increases the sum more than double; there is a decree, and this, again, is followed by a civil process. The law generally allows one shilling and one penny (Irish) for the trouble of filling the blanks in the process; and Peery, as generally, takes the trouble on himself, that is, fills them himself, and pockets, to use his own language, *the thirteen.*

The same sum is also allowed for the service upon the party; Peery employs a needy understrapper to serve, at twenty pence per day, and two "throws" of whiskey, one hundred; and here again "fobs" the difference. Thus Dermid incurs still more debts, and Peery makes still more money. The understrapper promising the whole weight of his vast friendship on the occasion, than which nothing is farther from his power or will, contrives to pick up a shilling, too, at the very moment he serves the process.

The sessions come on. Dermid vainly prays for indulgence. By some desperate shift he contrives to scrape together the sum first demanded; but learns, in affright and consternation, that it is now trebled. He cries out that he is ruined; wrings his wretched hands; perhaps the broken-spirited and contemptible man weeps; and perhaps is, at that very moment, reminded by Peery, "that sure his well lookin' wife or daughter might asily get him the money." Full to the chin with rage he cannot vent, Dermid returns home. His case comes on before the "county barrister;" and, as the mild and sapient lawgivers of the session-court term it, he is decreed; his only horse or cow is carried off; Peery brings the animal to public

street-auction, and, at one fourth of the value, knocks it down to—himself; and then sells it at a good profit; charges his reverend employer with the expenses for the recovery of Dermid's tithe; against this charge sets the auction-price of the horse; and it sometimes happens that the clergyman is a loser by the transaction.

Need it be observed that, through the whole course of this affair, Peery, and Peery alone, had the advantage. He got the two douceurs from Dermid; he filled the process; he got it served at a profit of eight hundred per cent; he gained two pounds, at least, on the cow or horse; and, at last, bamboozled and robbed his reverend employer, and sat down in the evening, over a bumper of whiskey punch, to drink (his poor mother calling him a Roman Catholic) long life to the minister's tithes, and may they never fail him!

This is no fancy-sketch. The man and the statements are carefully copied from the life and the facts; and if it be doubted that, exactly at the time of this narration, such a man as Peery did not figure, we can only engage to produce, at a fair warning, as many living fac-similes as may be specified; observing, that an original for our picture, at the present hour, ought to en-

title us to lay claim to an original for it half a century earlier ; for society may have improved, the arts and sciences may have advanced, the Bastille may have been torn down in one country and the Inquisition abolished in other; but the Irish tithe-procter of this day, and the Irish tithe-proctor of fifty years ago, are individuals of one and the same species.

And what has become of Dermid ? Why, he attended the sessions-court to hear himself decreed; he attended the sale of his "baste," to see it knocked down for a song; he turned towards his home, hastily concluding, that, for the poor man and the papist, there was no law or mercy in the land; he continued his long walk, chewing the ever-rising cud of this bitter, and desperate, and obstinate thought; he brought to mind, at the same time, all the life's labour and sweat he had uselessly expended; he crossed the threshold of his puddled hovel, and heard his children squalling for food ; and then he turned his back upon them ; walked hastily abroad ; gave a kick to the idle spade he met on his way; sought out some dozen Dermids or Paddies similarly situated with himself; between them they agreed to take the tithe-proctors and the law of tithes into their own hands; proposed

silly oaths to each other; and the result was, "the boys" of whom Jack Doran made mention, called, apart from the abbreviation, Whiteboys.

CHAPTER VII.

Rhia Doran strictly adhered to the voluntary promise he had given old Ned Shea, and sought Crohoore in every place that could be supposed to afford him secrecy and shelter.

As before stated, it was the general opinion that Crohoore had not removed from the neighbourhood, being frequently seen, even at a late period, always alone, and walking at a quick pace, with his short gun in his hand, and from those who thus casually encountered him, or who averred so, not seeming to shun any observation. But his absolute pursuers vainly looked to meet him; their path he never crossed; and while Rhia Doran put all his wits to work, and

in every way availed himself of the assistance of his subjects, over the extensive range of country under his obedience—thus, it might be said, having on the alert every eye for six miles round—all proved to no purpose; Crohoore-na-bilhoge, or Crohoore of the bill-hook, the surname given to him since the murder, was still at large.

But, notwithstanding the allegiance due to King Doran, a principle had gone abroad that powerfully operated in Crohoore's favour, and served to counteract the general zeal that might otherwise, by determined combination, have speedily delivered him into the hands of his pursuers: and this was nothing else than a now firm opinion, established in the minds of the population of the whole country, of the broad hints given at the wake and fully credited, (as we have already seen) that Crohoore lived in constant intercourse with "the good people," and was under their sovereign protection. None but those who have had local opportunities to observe, at the period we deal with, the mental habits of the peasantry of Ireland, and their devoted belief in the fairy superstition, will at once accede to the probability of such a statement: to those, however, we appeal, and leave

it for them to determine whether or not we outstep, in the present instance, the modesty of nature.

It happened about this time that, having received private and anonymous intelligence, (the informant, divided between his fears and his conscience, thus subtly trying to cheat the devil in the dark) that Crohoore might be come on in a particular direction, Doran led a select party to the ground, and remained anxiously on the watch. It was night. For some hours they guarded, together, one point; and then the leader left a sentinel there, and withdrew his main body to search in another and nearer quarter. The man thus posted alone, having been wearied with much previous fatigue, unconsciously dropt asleep. How long he slept is unknown, when he was flattered with a smart slap on the shoulders, and desired to stir himself. "Yes, yes, avich, I'm comin'," said the man, scrambling up; "an' ye have the bloody dog at last, have ye?"

He was now on his legs, and, facing round, saw, instead of the comrade he had expected, "the bloody dog" himself, standing within a few yards of him, his short gun held to his hip, as if prepared for instant action. The valiant

as well as watchful sentinel started back; Crohoore advanced a step on him, and spoke in a cautious tone.

"Stand where you are, man; I have no mind to harm you. Thady, where's the little sense I thought you had? loosin' your night's-rest to no purpose? Mind your own callins, Thady Muldowny, an' never mind me; I give the advice, let you follow it, or, as sartain as we both stand here, you'll live to sorely rue it. Jack Doran an' the other boys are down at Tom Murphy's barn, lookin' afther me, an' that's all they'll have for it, as yourself sees; go to 'em; say I sent you; say you were spakin' a bit to me, and tell 'em the same words I tould you. Go your ways, Thady, an' remember the friendly warnin' I give, an' keep to your warm bed, by nights, for the futur:" he waved his arm in the direction he wished Thady to travel, then turned on his heel the opposite way, and to Thady's mortal joy was quickly out of view, who, by the way, attributed to Crohoore's clemency, only, the remains of the breath, by aid of which he continued to mutter all the while his bugbear was visible, "Lord save us; Lord protect an' save us; praise be to God!"

Running with all his might, Thady gained the

barn mentioned by Crohoore, and there, indeed, found his companions where he had been told to look for them. He did not fail to relate the adventure, with some little additions, calculated effectually to disguise the fact of his own drowsiness and subsequent inanity; and from this night forward few were found willing to engage personally in the pursuit after Crohoore. The hint given to Thady Malone appeared to have reason in it; mortal might, when put in competition with a person who was concealed and fondled by the mischief-doing "good people," seemed not only useless, but extremely dangerous in the main: and so, except Rhia Doran himself and one or two others, who were either superior to the general superstition, or wished in the teeth of their qualms to establish a character for unparalleled courage, all refrained from an experiment which was likely, if persevered in, to entail bewitched cows, blighted faces, withered limbs, and even the whole and entire abduction of themselves or their children, whichever happened to be the most comely, with nothing but a besom, or the handle of a pitchfork left in their place, and changed, by the hands of the good people, into a general likeness of the corpse of the person thus ravished,

while the victim himself, or herself, passed a life of deception, jollity, and splendour in the fairy hall contrived within some neighbouring "rath."

Doran, however, continued fixed and faithful to his purpose; he was invariably on Crohoore's track whenever he could indirectly hear a whisper of his probable motions; and to those who wondered at his fool-hardiness, and still more at his exemption from hurt or harm, he jocosely said he had got a charm from a fairy-doctor that preserved him in a whole skin; and this plea, although it might have been meant in jest, was argument sound and good with those who boasted no such talisman against the fantastic devilries of the spiteful little race, whom they thought mischievous, while they pronounced them "good," and who thus, like all dangerous despots, came in for that

> ——————"Mouth-honour, breath,
> Which the poor heart would fain deny, but dare not."

Perhaps Doran gained, by his assiduity, one or two points of some value to him, apart from the self-gratification and reward of doing a generous and humane action. In the first place, his readiness to forget old grievances, incurred from Pierce Shea, and Alley and her father,

bought him "golden opinions from all sorts of people;" his coming forward so actively to guard their interests, in adversity, and to venture his limbs and life in their defence, who, having once been his friends, changed into his bitterest foes; this made a popular impression, the fervency of which no words could express, and, even by the soberest of his neighbours, Jack Doran's bad qualities were now forgotten. Another advantage resulted that, in all probability, he prized still more. "The boys" of the district applauded his intrepidity to the skies, and whispers arose, not lost on Doran's quick ear, that the whole barony did not contain another man so fit to lead them on nocturnal expeditions of a different kind; to concentrate their strength, and direct their half-conceived views; in fact, to be their captain.

Things were in this state when Pierce Shea, after his illness of two months, was at length able to resume, in his own person, the pursuit after Alley and the murderer of her parents. Doran's manly conduct had reached his ear from a hundred admiring tongues; his father brought them together; Pierce could not avoid feeling gratitude and full forgiveness towards his old rival; and, when Doran once more

renewed his offer to join him in all future operations, a bond of amity was immediately formed between them; his hands were over and over shaken; old Ned shouted forth his joy and approbation; the cup was more than once pledged to success; and the young men called each other the greatest friends in the world.

But seemingly assisted, and cautiously followed, by Andy Houlohan only,—who at length remained the sole creature that from duty or love (other motives were out of the question) would ventureto track Crohoore through his own green raths, in some one of which they firmly believed him a resident—the united efforts of Shea and Doran proved useless as ever. Almost night after night, and sometimes day and night, they were on foot, or on horseback, over the country; confused rumours of Crohoore's appearances incessantly, though indirectly, reaching them: and some of these reports seemed sufficiently bewildering and startling. It was averred, though none dared come forward to authenticate the statements, that the *shingawn* had frequently been seen, at one moment, down by a certain stream, in a certain hollow, and, as a comparison of notes demonstrated, at the next moment, and by a different person, many miles

away, sitting on as certain a stone, on the top of as certain a hill, his lank red hair fluttering in the wind, and his red eye turned wistfully off, as if watching the progress of some of his many accommodating messengers, through the extreme distance.

Andy Houlohan need not have given to his foster-brother a more unbounded proof of devoted affection than by at present treading in his footsteps. On proper ground, Andy could have braved and despised, as readily as any man, substantial danger from bludgeon, alpeen, or pistol; but let it not be supposed that an iota of courage now came to aid his love. Of all human beings, arrived at years of maturity (we will not say discretion), Andy Houlohan yielded to supernatural creatures of every denomination, whether *thigha, banshee,* fetch, sheeog, or phooka, the fullest credence and dominion, and professed the strongest aversion to a rencontre with any of them, of what class soever. But as the latter race were by far the most numerous, the most intermeddling, and the most mischievous, his dread of them bore proportion to his idea of their nature and numerical importance, and, when once out in a lonesome place, never left him. There was one notion, however,

which, distinct from his genuine affection for Pierce, and though it still had no feature of courage, helped Andy to persevere in his perilous wanderings. It got, somehow, into his head, that he might be, "under God," the happy means of preserving his foster-brother from harm. Less likely things had come to pass. Pierce was hot "from a child up," and, coming in contact (which he must) with the good people, would, if left to himself, be ruined entirely; and Andy calculated that the only chance of safety to his *dolth* depended on the prudent avoiding, or conciliating, and, as he resolved it should be, obsequious conduct he prescribed for his own adoption in any such appalling predicament.

So, on he followed, picking his steps as cautiously as if the ground were strewed with new-laid eggs,—or, to use his own expression, "as a hen walking over a stubble-field;" on, through thick and thin, night and morning, after Shea and Doran; still no Crohoore was found: the prepossessions of the country-people continuing to obstruct all regular inquiry; and, finally grown inveterate, now refusing to supply even their former reports of accidental meetings with him.

But if *they* conceived that Crohoore ought not to be meddled with, in consequence of his

close connexion, identity indeed, with the good people, the magistrates of the county seemed of a different opinion. Daring robberies had lately become very frequent; the houses of the rich were broken open at night, and plundered of every thing valuable; the very poorest were despoiled of their little pittance; and all this was perpetrated by some unknown and undiscovered gang, every trace of whom had hitherto evaded the civil powers. Now, however, from the stories the magistrates had heard of Crohoore, it struck them that a person shewing such resolution, closeness, and cleverness of character, was very likely, whatever he might lack in personal prowess, to be the leader of exactly such a band of secret and adroit desperadoes: and this strong surmise was confirmed by accounts of his having been often met in the direction where the outrages happened. A reward, immediately subsequent to the murder of the Doolings, had been offered for his apprehension; but the new suspicions mentioned, made him an object of increased interest, and the *posse comitatus* were accordingly straining every nerve on the look out.

Crohoore-na-bilhoge baffled, however, his new pursuers, as well as his old. Sometimes

our friends, Shea, Doran, and Andy, fell in with the other party, and all united, following up some hint proposed on either side, in common chase and common cause. But all efforts went for nothing; the game left them still at fault, and —it was rather extraordinary—without seeming to be a whit more in dread of apprehension; for to the country people, if they were belief-worthy, who dared not molest him, and who chanced to stray out at night, his appearance was as frequent as ever; they, mean time, keeping all that snug among themselves.

It were but a dull repetition here to give in detail the trifling circumstances attendant upon the daily and nightly search of Pierce Shea, Andy, and their new friends; as, up to a certain evening, their toilsome occupation differed only in the different route chosen. But, upon the evening alluded to, an occurrence took place worth recording.

The month of March had began, when a man from a remote district, sufficiently out of reach of the supernatural tyrants of Clarah, their jurisdiction, or any thing to be feared from it, came to Shea's house, where Doran now constantly lived, with information that, but a few hours before, he, the informant, saw Cro-

hoore pass along the hills in the direction of Castlecomer, a village some miles distant. Shea, Doran, and Andy, instantly set forward, pressing their spy to join them; but he declined the adventure; even he thinking that he had run just enough hazard by pointing out the way; and Andy agreed with him, and thought it reasonable.

Our friends engaged in this expedition more ardently, and with more hopes of success than for a long time they had felt; and their depression was proportionably strong as, after another night of useless toil, they wended homeward, in the cold gray morning, through the little glen of Ballyfoile.

This place, four miles north-east of Kilkenny city, is a romantic dell, formed by hills of considerable height, and of abrupt and almost perpendicular descent, having rather an appearance of art, from the similarity of their form, and, at some points, approaching each other's bases so closely as not to leave more than eight or ten paces between, while at no part are they more than forty yards asunder. They are clothed to the summit with thick and nearly impenetrable furze-bush, tangled underwood, and dwarf thorn, and, adown their sides, in-

dented with deep channels, formed by rushing water from above, when, after heavy rain, it falls, with cataract speed, to swell the little brook that, at other times, just trickles through the narrow green slip of valley below. There is nothing of sublimity or grandeur about the spot; yet, to a spectator placed midway up the glen, there is much to create interest. Pent up so closely, no continuous scenery at either hand, nothing but the firmament visible overhead, and, from much abrupt curving, shut out from all view at either end, he would (if a simple and contemplative character, easily to be acted on by the ever-changing and wondrous aspect of nature) feel that there hung around the place a strange and unusual air of loneliness, making it the fit abode of the prowling fox and timid rabbit, its only inhabitants.

About ninety years ago, this glen was a dark and intricate wood of spreading oak, affording a favourable and favourite rendezvous to a desperate band of freebooters that ruled over the neighbourhood, and who were formidable enough, as tradition goes, to defeat and pursue into Kilkenny a company of "troopers," sent against them from that city. Since then it has often given the same refuge to persons carrying on

the same profession, though on a more contracted scale; and, but a few years ago, the last adventurous fellows who levied tribute upon travellers' purses, in the district, lay concealed here for more than a week, while the whole civil force was in pursuit of them, and were at length only apprehended when they sought an asylum elsewhere.

Shea, Doran, and Andy, pursuing their way homeward through this little solitude, which, at the time of our narration, bore nearly the same aspect it does at present, had gained that part where the hills approached each other nearest: Pierce Shea was a few paces before Doran, and Andy still farther in advance, when Pierce thought he heard something like the snap of a lock behind him. He turned quickly round and saw a man, a little at Doran's back, but out of their line of march, in the act of raising a gun to his shoulder, visibly with intent to fire on one of the party; but before Pierce could use any precaution, or the fellow pull his trigger, a shot from the opposite hill, grazing Doran's breast, lodged in the arm of the assassin, and the deadly weapon fell from his hand. Shea sprung upon him and held him fast; Andy, who had heard the shot, but was further ignorant of the

transaction, made all speed to his foster-brother, and Doran, looking as if confounded at the suddenness of the thing, or else at his own narrow escape, for the ball had cut through the breast of his coat, was the last to turn to the spot.

"Scoundrel!" said Pierce, "tell me your reason for wishing to take away my life; did I ever wrong or injure you? for I cannot recollect having seen you before."

"Arrah, man, you never done any thing to me," answered the surly-looking fellow.

"Why, then, did you lĕvel at my life? I am now sure I was your mark."

"Sure enough," said the man.

"For what cause, I ask you again?"

"Tunther-an-ouns! how duv I know for what? ax that question iv them that sent me to du id; an' don't shake my arm afther that manner; it's smashed enough widout your help."

"And who are they that sent you?"

"Avoch, now!" was the answer.

"Well, God himself had a hand in id, master Pierce," here interrupted Andy, who conceived, after some effort, that he had pretty correctly guessed the occurrence; "he was goin' for to shoot you, Pierce, agra, an' see—it's himself he kilt."

Doran drew nearer.

"I'd swear upon the mass-book, Pierce," said he, "that Crohoore-na-bilhoge is at the bottom of this cursed affair."

"Don't, then, a-bouchal, fur maybe you'd swear in a lie," observed the wounded man; "I got my best arm broke by id, howsomever the duoul that happened to cum about."

"You'll suffer for this insolence as well as for the rest of the job, you villain," rejoined Doran. "Villain! arrah, is that the word wid you? Dhar-Dieu, bud it will be a sore sayin' to you, or my name isn't Shawn."

"Who was the person that set you on?"—once more asked Shea, shaking him violently.

"Why, there's that honest boy there, says he's ready to swear to him for you."

"Pierce, you'll find I'm right," said Doran; "the first shot from this fellow ——"

"You'll never prove that agin me," the assassin interrupted; "I fired no shot—bad loock to the flent for stoppin me!"

"I heard your piece snap, then," said Shea.

"Nothin' else you heard, agra."

"The first shot," Doran continued, "was meant for you Pearce; the second for me; and again, I say, I'd lay my life that Crohoore knew

of the one, and with his own hands fired the other."

"Answer, is he right?" roared Shea, "or I'll redden the sod you stand on with your blood! was it Crohoore sent you? was it Crohoore fired that shot? tell me truly, or ———" Pierce cocked his pistol.

"Och, avich, you're asy answered," said the man, changing colour for the first time; "he that sent me, stands ———"

"Stop!" Doran shouted out in a voice of extraordinary triumph. "He stands on the brow of the hill, this moment! Look, Pierce, look!"

Shea looked up, and on the brow of the hill saw Crohoore indeed standing, and calmly contemplating the scene below. Instantly he fired and missed him, and Crohoore was in another instant out of sight.

"Here, Doran," he then said, "take this man to my father's house, and secure him well; Andy, come your ways with me," and he dashed against the abrupt steep, with too much precipitancy to make the mastering it an easy matter, and his progress up, through furzes, underwood, and tangled roots, was of course much slower than if he had exerted his strength less, and his judgment more.

But he gained the summit, panting and out of breath; looked around the now wide country, and saw no one. He ran a few steps forward and stood gazing down into another valley, which was a more open continuation of that he had just quitted, but which, turning quickly round the base of the hill, here met him. The descent he had now to make was much less precipitous than that which he had just clambered up; in fact, only a gentle slope; and opposite was another swell of the same kind, above which stood the old square castle of Ballyfoile, whence the ground imperceptibly fell, in a high state of cultivation, towards Kilkenny.

There was a field of green corn in the valley, adjoining a pasture where some cows grazed, and where a half-naked boy had his station to prevent trespass, by the cows, or aught else, among the corn, as, with his hands squeezed tight under his arms to keep them warm, he jigged to his own whistle, if not with grace or skill, at least with violence enough to prevent the blood from growing stagnant in the dense cold of the early March morning. To him Shea made all speed; and,

"Did you see any one come down the hill yonder?" he asked.

"E—ah!" accompanied by a dull stare, was the only answer. Pierce repeated his question.

"Did myself see any body comin' down from the hill, is id?"

"Yes, a-vich-ma-cree," replied Andy, now behind; "that's the very thing we want to know."

"Then mostha, bud if that's all, often's the time I did," with a leer, and resuming his jig.

"Bud, tell us a-vourneen, if you seen any one at all at the present time."

"Hia-h! pooh-a! *gho-moch-a-sinn!*"* piped the imp, as if he had not heard the last question, and shaking a stick he held in his hand at a matronly crow, who had just turned round her head, with a wistful look at the nice green corn.

"Will you give a civil answer?" asked Shea, losing all patience with the loss of time.

"Asy, Pierce, agra, an' lave the duoul's bird to me," said Andy, in a whisper: then with his most conciliating tone to the boy—

"Tell us, won't you, a-bouchal, did you obsarve no one in the world comin' down the hill side this morning?"

"Arrah, then, will yourself tell *me*, i' you

* Get out of that.

plaise, do *you* obsarve any thing like as if I war blind, about me?'"

"That's as mooch as to say you did?"

"I seen a very ugly spalpeen as you'd meet in a summer's day, comin' down."

"Thank you, a-vich; it's the very fellow we're lookin' for."

"Hauld him fast, then; for, barrin' my eye-sight's bad, it was your own self I seen," and the urchin glanced up, and gave a low giggle.

"Musha, but you're a droll gorçoon," said Andy.

Pierce stamped in vexation, and, breaking away, began to ascend the opposite height. Andy remained, and, after bearing with much of the youngster's raillery, and giving way to a little badinage on his own part,—for Andy, in the absence of Paudge Dermody, thought he could pass a joke well enough,—at last learned that the boy had really seen Crohoore descending the hill but a few moments before, and passing in the very direction Pierce now pursued. The lad's attention had been particularly directed to him by his size, the unusual circumstance of his bearing a gun, and his visible anxiety to escape observation.

Now, Andy Houlohan, for the reasons before

mentioned, had every objection that Shea should happen to fall in with Crohoore, and sagely resolved to keep what he heard to himself. Besides, hoping but little from this weary pursuit, and tired as well as afraid of it, he had lately determined on a plan of acting of his own, by which he resolved that they should not at all come in contact with each other. But we will not anticipate.

While Andy and the lad were at converse together, Pierce had ascended the hill. Some men and women were at work in a field at a little distance below him, and to them he rapidly walked for information. After the usual salutation, "*Marah-uth,*"* he inquired if they had seen the object of his search: but, "The Lord keep him out of our path!" and then determined silence from the whole party, was all the satisfaction he could obtain, when a young girl out of breath, and pale with haste and fright, ran furiously through a gap into the field, and, setting herself on a large stone near where Shea stood, seemed ready to faint away.

"Musha, what *miau* is come over you, Cauth, a-lanna-ma-chree?" said her mother, abandoning her work, running on, squatting herself down,

* Good morning, &c.

and looking, with maternal anxiety, into the girl's face.

"Och, mother, mother, I'll never be a day the betther iv id!"—

"Ochown!—iv what, a-lanna?"—the great, strong woman put her great strong arms around her; the girl cried a little on her mother's bosom, then, somewhat relieved, drew a heavy sigh, and went on.

"Och! I was cumin' along the bosheen, an' just thinkin' iv the terrible story yourself tould us about him last night, when at the short turn, hard-by Mulroony's barn, where the eldher bushes makes the place so dark, I sthruck myself plump up against Crohoore-na-bill——"

"Whisht!" cried the mother, raising her hand, and glancing with evident alarm at Shea; the girl, misapprehending her meaning, hid her eyes, and screamed in terror; but she was set right in a whisper, and then ended her story in so low a tone that Pierce could not catch another word. He had heard enough, however, to guide him a step further in the chase; Mulroony's barn, and the spot in the narrow lane, mentioned by the girl, he knew well, and thither hastened in improved speed and a renewed hope.

He gained the place, looked sharply about, and no creature was visible, In an opposite route from that the girl must have come, Pierce continued to make way, and, following the course of the lane, found himself on the high road. Here he paused a moment, puzzled as to which side he should turn next, for still he saw or met no living thing. He ascended a contiguous eminence, and far, far off, through the foggy atmosphere, discerned the figure of a man winding close by a fence; it must be he; he marked the spot, and with the elasticity of a stag measured the intermediate space across the field. Still and still was Pierce at fault. From another rising ground he again strained his eyes, and again caught a glimpse of, as he conceived, the same figure. Onward he bounded, and gained his second landmark. Just as he came up, a head was popped over a high hedge at his right hand. Pierce's heart leaped; he drew his pistol; was instantly at the other side of the hedge, and there seized a man who was not Crohoore. Discovering his mistake, Pierce let him go, and earnestly asked pardon.

"*Dieu-a-uth,*"* said the astonished stranger.

* God save you.

"*Dieu-as-mayu-uth,*" * answered Pierce: scarce able to articulate, overcome by exertion, and the nervousness that generally succeeds the sudden excitation of hope or fear when as suddenly disappointed.

"Savin' manners," continued the man, "will you let a body be askin' you the name that's on you?—May be you'd be master Pierce Shea?"

"The very man," said Pierce.

"Why, then, you're only the very man I tuck you for, an' the very one I was wishin' to see, into the bargain."

"Here you see me, then; and what, after?"

"I hard iv your story, an' could make a sort iv a guess to what you're about, I'm thinkin'; may be you're not huntin' Crohoore-na-bilhoge?"—

"Your guess is as true as the daylight."

"Musha, then, as good loock 'ud have id, I have a sort of a notion that may be I'd be the very boy could tell you where to find him."

"Where, where?" exclaimed Pierce.

"An' I'll be bould to say, you'd be for offerin' somethin' that 'ud be handsome, fur the news."

"I'd give the wide world!"

* God and mother save you.

"That's a good dale, if it was yours to give."

"Or all I have in the world!"

"An' that's a purty penny, too, by all accounts that I could hear. But, somehow, myself, ever an' always, had a likin' an' love for *araguth-chise*;* an' if there was sich a thing as a *guineah orrh*,† or a thing that a-way, an' if we war to see the face iv id, who knows."

Pierce ran his hand into his pocket, and drew out a brace of guineas; bank notes were then a scarcity.

"Here, then," he said, "and now your information, quick; oh, quick, quick, and heaven bless you!"

"They're the right sort, to a sartainty," observed the man, stooping down, juggling the guineas separately on a flat stone near him, and then folding them up in a dirty piece of paper, thrusting them into the very bottom of his breeches-pocket, and, with great sobriety of face, buttoning them up. At last he thought of going on.

"Why, then, I'll tell you every word about id. You must know, master Pierce, myself is none o' your common counthry spalpeens (not for to say so by way of disparishment o' the country, where I was bred an' born); but I

* Money down. † Golden guinea.

knows more nor a dozen o' them cratures, that does nothin' only dig an' plough from year's end to year's end; I have a sort of a call to the law, d'ye see me, an' I goes to the neighbours wid a bit o' paper, or may be a bit o' calf-skhin, just as the thing happens to be;" winking cunningly.

We may venture to mention here, begging pardon for the digression, that in all probability it was a happy circumstance for the process-server, that Andy Houlohan heard not this intelligence, as from his cradle he mortally hated all "bums,"* and might have felt little repugnance in knocking a chip from his skull, just out of general antipathy to the race.

"What have I to do with this?" asked Pierce.

"Why, I'm only lettin' you into id fur to larn you that I'm not the gourloch to be frightened wid your sheeog stories, or the likes, an' fur that raison, to the ould duoul myself bobs 'em. Well, à-roon. I overhard them sayin' id, that had a good right to know all about id, as how there was a lob o' money fur the man that 'ud lay hould o' this Crohoore; an' so I went here, an' axin' there, and may be I didn't make out the

* Bailiffs.

ups an' downs o' the thing; hopin' I'd cum across him in some o' my thravels; an' sure enough I have him cotched his loocky an' blessed morning."

"But where is he, man?" impatiently interrupted Pierce; "what do you keep me here for?"

"Och, a-bouchal, there's two words to a bargain: if you war the *omadhaun* to give your money before hand, that's no raison in life myself 'ud be over soon wid my speech."

"Rascal! do you mean to trifle with me?" rejoined Pierce, clutching his pistol.

"Be pacable, now, a-vich," said the limb of the law, drawing a brace of them from his bosom; "you see, if you're for that work, I'm not the fool to venture out where rib-breakin', done wid a sledge, is often our best treatment; an' so, here's two good shots for your one; but where's the use o' that when we can settle the matther in a more lawful manner. Just listen to me. I was goin' to sthrike a bit of a bargain wid you: you must as good as take your buke oath—an' its puttin unheerd of thrust in you, when I hav'nt the buke to hand—but I hear you come of as honest a stock as myself—well, you must swear that every skhillin o' the reward,

fur the cribbin o' this bouchal, 'ill come into my pocket, an' no other body as mooch as sneeze at it."

"I swear by my father's soul, you must get every farthing of it."

"See now; sure that's more asy nor to waste our powther for nothin'; an' tell me, duv you see no sort of a place you'd be for hiding yourself in, supposin' a body was purshuin you?"

"Do you mean the cave?"

Just across the field was the terrific-looking entrance to the cave of Dunmore.

"That's the very spot, a-vich; keep your tongue to yourself; keep your toe in your brogue; tell no livin' sowl what we're about; I'm just goin' a start o' the road, to shuv this to a neighbour," shewing a latitat, "an' I'll be wid you again while you can shake yourself; stop in the mouth o' the cave, an' watch 'till I come; an' I'm the divil's rougue or we'll ketch a hould o' the bouchal, plaise God."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE cave of Dunmore is regarded as the great natural wonder of this district; so much so, that travellers come out of their road to see and explore it. At the time of our narration, it was believed by the surrounding peasantry to be the residence of every description of supernatural beings; nay, to this day, there are shrewd notions on the point; but, at a remoter one, the conviction reigned in its glory. Here, on great occasions, did the good people hold their revels; and it was also the chosen abode of the Leprechauns, or fairy mechanics, who from all quarters of the island assembled in it (the cavern being suspected to ramify, under ground, to every point of the kingdom) for the purpose of manufacturing foot-gear for the little race to which they were appended. This could not be doubted, as many had heard the din of their hammers, and caught odd glimpses of their green sherkeens, or of their caps with red feathers in them, what time the stars grew white before

the sun. It was the dwelling, too, of more horrid sprites, of whose nature there existed no clear notion, but who, in the very distant abodes of the cavern, roamed along the off-brink of a little subterranean rivulet, the boundary of their dark abode, and who took vast delight in exterminating any unfortunate being fool-hardy enough to cross the forbidden stream, and so encroach on their charmed domain; and this was also fully shewn by the splintered human bones that (really, however) strewed the bed of the rill. Wild shrieks were often heard to pierce the darkness through the gaping mouth of the cavern; but oftener the merry fairy-laugh, and the small fairy-music, tingled to the night-breeze.

Ths absolute physiognomy of the place was calculated to excite superstitious notions. In the midst of a level field, a precipitate inclined plane led down to a sudden pit, across which, like a vast blind arch, the entrance yawned, about eighty feet perpendicular, and from thirty to forty wide; overhung and festooned with ivy, lichen, bramble, and a variety of wild shrubs, and tenanted by the owl, the daw, and the carrion crow, that made rustling and screaming exit into the day-light as soon as disturbed by an exploring foot;

and when, all at once, you stood on the verge of the descent, and looked from the cheery day into the pitch darkness of this gaping orifice, repelling and chilling the curiosity that it excited,—giving a promise of something to be discovered, and a threat to the discoverer,—suggesting a region to be traversed so different from our own fair familiar world, and yet a nameless danger to be incurred in the progess,—your heart must have been either very callous or very bold, and imagination entirely a blank, if, at this first glance, you felt no unusual stir within you.

After entering the mouth of the cavern, the light of your torches shewed you that vast masses of rock protruded overhead, ready at every step to crush, and held in their place as if by miracle alone. A short distance on, two separate passages branched to the right and to the left. To explore the one, a barrier of steep rocks, made dangerous by the damp slime that covered them, should be scaled; then you proceeded along a way of considerable length, sometimes obliged, from the lowness of the heading, to stoop on hands and knees, still over slippery rocks, and over deep holes, formed by the constant dripping of the roof; till at last you

suddenly entered a spacious and lofty apartment, known by the name of the market-cross, from its containing a petrified mass that has some likeness to the ancient and curious structure so called. Indeed, throughout the whole chamber, the awful frolic of nature bears comparison with art:—ranges of fluted columns, that seem the production of the chisel, only much dilapidated by time, rise almost at correct distances to the arching roof; by the way, having necessarily been formed by petrifaction, drop upon drop, it is astounding to think of the incalculable number of years consumed in the process. And this is the regal fairy hall; and the peasants say, that when the myriad crystallizations that hang about are, on a gala evening, illuminated, and when the for-ever falling drops sparkle in the fairy light, the scene becomes too dazzling for mortal vision.

The other passage winds an equal distance, and leads to the subterranean rill that bubbles, as before mentioned, over scraps of human bones; and over some entire ones too; we having, when led to the cavern for scenic illustration of the facts of this history, adventurously plunged our hand into the clear water, and taken therefrom a tibia of unusual length; and, indeed, the fact

that such human relics are there to be seen, almost a quarter of a mile from the light of the earth, must, if we reject the peasant's fine superstition, shew us the misery of some former time of civil conflict, that could compel any wretched fugitive to seek, in the recesses and horrors of such a place, just as much pause as might serve him to starve, die, and rot.

On the edge of the descent, exactly opposite the blank gape of the cavern, Pierce Shea seated himself, awaiting the return of his accidental acquaintance. It was only natural that he should entertain some misgivings as to the truth of the story just heard from that person, taking into account the kind of character his informant, even according to his own shewing, must necessarily be, and viewing as much of his manner and behaviour as had come under Pierce's immediate notice. But a more distressing prepossession seized on his mind, and now banished every other fancy. His poor mistress, his beloved and lost Alley, might have been hurried by her ravisher, when pressed by sudden pursuit and alarm, to this very place. Amid its dank and loathsome darkness she might, this moment, drag on a blighted and hated existence, or prepare to yield up life alto-

gether: nay, perhaps she was, long ago, a corse, festering and unburied in its foul recesses. The recollection of the horrors he had experienced on the morning after the murder came upon him, followed by forebodings of worse horrors yet to come; and he sat stupified with the pressure of these feelings, when Andy's voice at his back startled him from his reverie.

Looking up, he saw the kind and considerate creature standing over him, "doubly armed." It was almost perforce that Andy had, on this expedition, been compelled to carry a gun. He was as much averse to such intricate weapons as honest David, in the Rivals. To his surmise the plain alpeen ranked higher; because, first, from the simplicity of its construction it required no round-about work, such as priming and loading, and cocking and snapping, and putting it to the shoulder, and shutting one eye, before you could let it off; and, secondly, because he knew the practice of the one infinitely better than the practice of the other. He now appeared, however, with his gun in his left hand, and, not very appropriately, a wooden "noggin" of milk in his right, which, he said, "he could, wid a clear conscience, take his buke oath was hot from the cow, in regard he

had milked the hugdeen,* himself." The fact is, at the house of a fourth cousin of his "father's mother's sister," where he had seen "the blue smoke makin' its way out o' the dour, a sure sign the phatoes were rowlin' out on the table," that is, breakfast in preparation, Andy had gone in, and (upon footing of a relationship the good people were till then rather unprepared to admit) first ventured a hint about a "little bit an' sup' for himself;" and when he had made a hearty meal of potatoes, and of tolerably stale buttermilk, nothing better being in the way, he next craved and got a noggin-full for Pierce, together with half a cake of "griddle bread;" but, as he was crossing over the fields with this, he espied, "as God would have id," a cow awaiting the milkmaid; and, slily overturning the buttermilk into "a gripe;" Andy approached, and drew from the animal as much "good, sweet milk as he had spilt; an' he was handy enough at the work, in regard that often of a night he used to give a help to Breedge Chree, when the poor crature 'ud be hard pushed." Sitting down by Pierce, Andy gave this tale, with a manner so unintentionally, and yet so truly droll, that his foster-brother, afflicted as

* Little honey.

he was, could scarce refuse a smile; especially when, with a self-flattering broad grin, he ended by saying, "I'd lay my ould brogues to a laffina,* the colleen 'ill sware the good people were afore-hand wid her, this mornin'."

Andy then drew from the breast of his outside coat, that now for the first time in its life had been buttoned, the half-moon of oatmeal bread; and, "Now, masther Pierce, agra," he continued, "eat your 'nough as long as the vitt'ls 'ill last; bud, sure, this isn't the handsomest kind o' place we're sittin' in;" staring down at the cave; "come, let us make out some other spot that won't look so dushmal."

Pierce's feelings all rushed back upon him. He sprung up, and said,

"There is at present no other place for us, Andy; Crohoore-na-bilhoge is in that cave, and I'll drag him from it, or perish in the attempt."

The noggin dropped from Andy's hand, and down flowed the milk that had cost him some time, trouble, and conscience. He plunged at the noggin, but, in the attempt, lent it an unintentional kick, that sent it down to the descent with increased velocity, till it gave many a hol-

* Halfpenny.

low thump, thump, among the rocks in the mouth of the cavern. His distended eyes followed it for some time; then he reddened and frowned, and, selecting the vessel as the immediate matter on which to vent a vexation derived from another cause, slowly and bitterly said,

"Musha, then, the ould douol speed you on your road down there, below,"

Pierce, sensible of the kindness of his foster-brother, and pitying his loss, exhorted him not to mind the accident, as there was no help for it.

"None in the world," Andy replied, mournfully resuming his seat; "no help for spilt milk,* all the world over. But tell me, Pierce, a-chora; sure you're only fur jokin' me; sure you wouldn't be the mad crature to go into that cursed hole, afther Crohoore?"

"Have I come here for nothing, Andy, when I know he is now in it?"

"An' you're sure he is?"

Pierce gave his authority, and all the circumstances of his meeting with the law officer.

"Well à-vich; bud sure you'd have no chance iv him, there, of all places on the face o' the

* A proverb.

earth; where the good people, Christ save us, are as thick as the crows about him?"—

"Except it was hell itself, nothing else should stop me, Andy; and nothing shall."

"Mostha, bud there's little in the differ."

Pierce's new ally, Paddy Loughnan, here interrupted the conference. Glancing enviously at Andy, he drew Shea aside and whispered—

"Arrah, tell a body who is this wid you?"—

"My own foster-brother, and you may depend your life on him."

"Bud, duoul take him, it might happen he'd be for cryin' halves wid myself?"

"In my mind, the poor fellow scarce knows the meaning of the matter; and I'm quite sure he wouldn't be paid as an informer, with all the king's gold."

"Then he's just the sort of a soft omadhaun we want; he'll do betther nor than any other; an' sich a sthrong big fellow may be of sarvice. I'd fitther be on the road, at once; we can't go in, barrin' we have the lights; and they're no nearer nor 'Comer; is there any *araguth bawn** where the gould came frum?"

Pierce handed him a shilling.

* White money, or silver.

"Sweet was your fist. I've a sort of an ould horse to bring me back, an' I'll never stay leg 'till I'm here again. Dieu-a-uth!" and the law Mercury vanished.

From his observations of this man, and a guess at his calling, Andy comforted himself and tormented Shea with the expressed belief that his story of having seen Crohoore enter the cave was a falsehood, framed to get money, and that they should never again lay their eyes on him or it. "An' I'm sorry I have id to say of your father-an-mother's son, bud you're ever an' always over-foolish wid your money," continued Andy, who, on proper occasions, deemed it his bounden duty, being by a few years Pierce's senior, to assume the Mentor with his foster-brother: though, if he examined his conscience, thriftiness was none of his own failings.

Shea only drew a heavy sigh in answer to this observation; and, as the day wore on, Andy became more certain, and Pierce more tortured at his certainty, that Paddy Loughnan was "a bite," and that Crohoore was no more in the cave than he, Andy—"Lord keep him from any sich thing!"—was in it. But, as it was near noon when Paddy had set off for Castlecomer, and as the distance was five miles, three hours, at

least, even including the service of the "sort of an ould horse," must necessarily pass before his return; that time had scarce yet elapsed, and Pierce, though almost hopeless from anxiety, did not therefore despair; and in fact, to his great joy, and Andy's undisguised consternation, Paddy made his re-appearance about three o'clock, mounted on, as (it was now obvious) he had truly termed it, his "sort of an ould horse," bearing candles, and providently supplied with touch-paper and matches, in case of unforeseen accidents within.

As the preparations were made for entering the cavern, Andy looked on with a stupid stare, except that, now and then, his eye scowled over Paddy Loughnan, from top to toe, as if he hated the marrow in his bones. When all was ready, Pierce turned and addressed him:

"Andy, you must take up your post here; if the murderer escape us, you cannot possibly miss him; so, shake hands, Andy," he continued, seeing the tears start into the poor fellows's eye, "and see that your flint and priming are in good order."

"Mostha, Pierce, a-cuishla-ma-chree," replied Andy, making strange faces to conceal his emotion, and dwelling on the squeeze of the

hand that had been afforded him — "Pierce abouchal" (growing familiar)—"just be said an' led by me: once go in there, an' you'll come out a dead man; or, what's worse, divil a sight o' your face we'll ever see, dead or alive."

"I'll make the trial, Andy."

"Considher wid yourself what sort they are; divil a crooked sthraw they care about your gun."

"You talk to no purpose, Andy."

"An' then, the poochas, that are in plenty, too."

"Nonsense, man; I'd face the devil in his den. Let me go."

"What 'ill myself say to poor ould Ned Shea when I must go home widout you?"

"Come,—free my hand, Andy."

"You won't get so much as Christhen berrin!"—struggling to keep the hand—"your bones 'ill be at the bottom o' the poochas' river!"—

"Let me go, I say again!"—

"Mostha!—bud sence you won't do as a body, that's fur your good, 'ud have you, hell to the brogue's length you'll go!"—cried Andy, his fears and affection blowing up into a fury,

as, more desperately than ever, he clutched Pierce's hand.

"Let the gorçoon come on his lawful business, you great omadhaun, you," said Paddy Loughnan, at some distance.

"Let *you* hould your tongue, or I'll break every bone in your unloocky carcass," retorted Andy, "lawful!—oh, if I was near you!"

"Do you mean to restrain me by force, Andy?" asked Pierce, smiling.

"Ma-hurp-on duoul! bud it's myself that will!" and, casting the gun from his left hand, he suddenly clasped his foster-brother in his arms.

"Tut, tut—you are not the man to do it," said Pierce, giving a smart jerk, that at once freed him, and sent Andy reeling among the rocks at a few yards distant: and, before he could recover himself, Shea had disappeared into the cavern, preceded by Paddy Loughnan.

The faithful follower plunged after them. A little way from the entrance he caught a glimpse of candle-light, and, after many prostrations among unseen rocks, came so near as to see it above him, over the barrier already described.

"Pierce, a-vourneen, wait, a doochy-bit; only let a body have id to say he was kilt along side o' you," Andy cried out.

"Go along out o' that wid yourself, you sprissaun," growled the voice of Paddy Loughnan, "you're big enough to look at, but you haven't the heart iv a slucheen!"*

"Hav'n't I?"—replied Andy, "hav'n't I?—och!—only lend me one hould o' *you*, an' I'll tache you the differ!" and, giving a shout and jump of utter defiance, he cast down, according to irresistible custom, his old hat. But, Paddy, progressing as he spoke, had left him to vent his ire, in chill and darkness; while the hat, weary, perhaps, of the long ill-usage it had undergone in his service, kept so close and snug that all Andy's groping and scramblings to recover it were ineffectual; and, at last, content merely to grope outward to the day-light, he left it, with a hearty curse, to the poochas.

"Well, God be wid you, Pierce Shea," he said in soliloquy, again sitting down close by the entrance to the cave, "fur there's little hopes you'll ever see Clarah agin; an' where's the body that ever set eyes on you bud 'ud be sorry, not to talk o' myself? ma-hoon-chise!

* A little mouse.

if there was his likes the world over an' over; an' farther, if I'd say id; it was a thousand an' a thousand pities he hadn't more o' the gumtion, an' that he was given to go by his own will, afore a good adviser like myself;—by the gun in my hand, I'll run fur Connaught, or some sich for'n part, sooner nor face home widout my poor Pierce Shea:" and Andy wept plentifully.

"Arrah, what's the matther wid you, honest boy?" asked a commiserating old woman, who had descended in search of a stray cow, and was surprised to see a tall, robust fellow, sitting there, bare-headed, and blubbering at some rate. "Enough an' worse, nor enough," replied Andy, and he told her his whole sad story.

"Why, then," said the comforter, "it 'ill be God's hand, an' God's hand alone, that 'ill ever bring him out alive again," and, professing sorrow that she could not stop, she hobbled off after her cow. But, meeting this body, and that body, the story was repeated and repeated; and one peeped down, and then another, and another; and, gaining courage as their numbers increased, they at last *came* down, and Andy saw himself surrounded by a crowd of old men

and old women, young girls and boys, all violent in their condolence. In return for his again-told tale, they gratified him with many a frightful anecdote of the cave, and the inhabitants of the cave; and then they turned to Crohoore, surpassing every former horror by accounts of his well-known intimacy with the good people, and of his very latest appearances under the most appalling circumstances, and in the most bewitched places.

The night began to fall on them while thus engaged, and the night's impressive silence to spread around; and the rocks at each side grew browner, and the horrid yawn of the cave blacker and blacker. Their voices sunk into murmurs, and they drew close to Andy, no one willing to venture home alone, and yet no movement made to proceed together. They dared not, in illustration of their stories, any longer point or look at the cavern; indeed, there seemed a general effort to change the subject. But, while they ceased to speak of *it*, the cave suddenly spoke to them, emitting through its vast mouth an awful echo of sounds, that, from the subdued and imperfect way in which they reached the group, it was impossible to ascribe to a particular cause—to human lips and lungs,

or to any thing else. All shrunk closer together, and,

"Oh vaugha! vaugha!" cried Andy, clapping his hands—"there's an end iv him!"—

"An'-murther, murther! see that!" exclaimed two or three of his companions, in a breath.

A dim, lurid light appeared some little distance in the cavern, flashing upward, and half showing a well known face, and lending kindred lustre to the two red eyes that fixed watchfully upon them. A general scream arose, and the light was instantly extinguished: but, ere another second had elapsed, there was a stir in the gloom, immediately at the entrance, and Crohoore-na-bilhoge, the incarnate goblin of their terrors, rushed out among them.

Andy Houlohan had the gun in his hund, and in mixed horror and desperation, immediately, and without bringing the piece to his shoulder, pulled the trigger: it recoiled with violence, and he measured his length among the rocks. Crohoore checked not his speed a second, but passing through the very midst of the crowd, and scattering them in every direction, gave Andy one expressive look, and, bounding up the ascent, was quickly lost to view, as, added to the increasing night, the depth in which they

stood obstructed their vision. After some minutes of silence, and then a general thanksgiving for their safety, the people departed in a body, leaving Andy to brave by himself all succeeding horrors.

He was yet in the act of ascertaining to what extent he had been disabled by his fall, or by the fairy-blow rather, when Paddy Loughnan, bareheaded, pale, and agitated, stood before him. The knowing, impudent aspect he so lately had worn was now gone, and his look cowering and terror-stricken.

"Who fired the shot?" he hastily asked.

"Myself; an' sorry I am to say id," answered Andy, feeling his bones.

"At Crohoore, was id?" continued Loughnan, in a close whisper.

"Aye, à-roon."

"Did you hit him?"

"Och, to be sure I did; but what hurt was that to the likes of him?"

"Where's Pierce Shea?"

"Where's Pierce She! musha, you unloocky bird, duv you come out o' your hole to ax me that question? It was all your doins! Let yourself tell me where's the poor gorçoon, or ——"

"Here man, here, take the light from my hand—look fur him in the left windin' o' the cave—hurry, hurry!" and Loughnan was quickly on the back of his "sort of an ould horse;" but though the wretched animal could not plead the slightest incumbrance of flesh as an excuse for his tardiness; though Paddy was armed, or rather heeled with one rusty spur; and even though they faced homewards, a circumstance, as all travellers know, of power to inspire horse-flesh with its best mettle; still did not "the sort of an ould horse" evince much sympathy with his master's visible wish to be far away from the cave in as short a time as possible.

Many a pause Andy made, as he crawled or groped through the dangerous intricacies of the cavern, to look about him for his foster-brother, and shout his name to the dense mass of rock; but the echoes running through the twinings and hollows, which he translated into a thousand terrible voices and meanings, were his only answer. He dared proceed to the side of the "poochas river," and, to confirm his own early and worst prophecies, there lay Shea, without sense or motion.

After a wild burst of sorrow, sincere as ever was sent up over a departed friend, Andy raised

his beloved Pierce, and placed his head on his shoulder, with intent, after a moment's rest, to convey him to the surface of the earth, as a first step towards the only solace he could now know, that is, "dacent christhen berrin," for the remains of his dolth. In this situation, however, Pierce drew a heavy sigh, and, after a little time, opened his eyes, and stared wildly around him. Recognizing Andy, his first word was a request that they should immediately quit the cave: one to which, it may be inferred, Andy made little opposition. The cool night air much revived him, and he asked how long it had been since he entered the cave, and if any thing had happened outside. A thrill of seeming alarm shook him when he heard of Loughnan's hasty and affrighted departure; but he grew half frantic at Crohoore's escape, and bitterly accused Andy of negligence and want of courage. It was in vain Andy urged the inutility of any attempt to seize Crohoore, and cited the harmless effect of the shot he had fired with so deadly an aim: Pierce insisted on his lack of spirit; and averred that, had he been present, he would have secured the murderer, though surrounded by a legion of devils.

Andy's time came for asking questions; but

Pierce seemed very unwilling to give any account of his own adventure; and, while his foster-brother still continued to urge him, Jack Doran and old Ned Shea appeared; they had for some time been seeking him out, with a led horse for his accommodation homewards, of which, in a very exhausted and harassed state, he availed himself, and all returned to Clarah.

Doran, in compliance with Pierce's requests of the morning, had led to his father's house the assassin of Ballyfoile, who, he added, now fully confessed that Crohoore was his employer; but the man either pretended to be, or really was, totally ignorant of any of Crohoore's affairs; that person having merely sought him out, and with a weighty fee hired him for a specific purpose.

It was hoped, however, that, when brought to justice for his offence, he would give more ample and satisfactory information. Pierce visited him on his arrival at home; the fellow was dogged and saucy, and laughed with brutal levity at every threat. He was confined in a place lately constructed for a cellar; it had no window, and the door and bolts were strong; Pierce, disgusted with the ruffian, locked and bolted the door, and put the key in his pocket.

The next morning he re-opened the door, for the purpose of conveying his prisoner to Kilkenny goal, but the apartment was empty; and the name, "Crohoore-na-bilhoge," scrawled in bad characters on the wall, and as if written with blood, seemed plainly to indicate by whose agency the prisoner had escaped.

CHAPTER IX.

THE last recited adventure made a deep impression on Pierce Shea; he grew gloomy and thoughtful, and confidentially acknowledged to his foster-brother that he was in a degree become a convert to his often urged opinions, and that they spent their time and energies in pursuit of one who, to all appearance, was protected by unearthly friends and agency. Andy heard this confession in profound silence, but with a catching of breath, and an expression of face, that indicated a terrified triumph in the late

belief it imported, and as if he was mortally frightened at a result he had himself so industriously laboured to produce; then he left Pierce's presence, his lips compressed, and his eyes bent studiously on the ground, and disappeared, Pierce could not surmise whither.

"By my conscience, Pierce," said Rhia Doran, when Shea spoke to him also on the matter, "the girl is either bewitched out of her natural senses and feelings, or something worse has happened."

"Something worse? what do you mean?"

"Aye, worse, a thousand times, Pierce."

"That is no answer, Doran; speak plainer."

"High hanging to me!"—resumed his friend, as if angry with himself,—"see what I have done, now; I forgot who I was speaking to: never mind me, Pierce, ma-bouchal, and just put it all out of your head."

"Jack, you must go on."

"Not I, by my soul, Pierce; I don't want to make your mind worse than it is."

"Why, Doran, 'tis neither fair nor friendly, though I think you a fair and friendly fellow, to keep any thing concerning Alley from me; therefore, I insist on your explanation; you shall not leave this till you satisfy me;" they sat,

as usual, in the house of Pierce's father, and at a late hour of the night, over their glass.

"Well, a-vich, sure I can just stay where I am, then," replied Doran, coolly sipping his liquor; "for I had rather sit here a twelvemonth than finish what, like a cursed fool, I so heedlessly began; because, though there may be no truth in it, it would only increase your troubles, Pierce, my boy, and I like you too well to be the bearer of unwelcome tidings."

"Harkye, Rhia Doran, I know you for a true friend—your actions are before me, and shew it, but my situation and feelings cannot bear crossing or trifling with; and, though we were to break squares for ever, you shall fully quell or fix the doubt your words have made; here—this moment—on this spot—go on, Doran;" he grew pale, and trembled in passion.

"Well, then, sooner than it should come to that, Pierce, and that I should find such a reward for—no matter; I'll satisfy you; but don't think you have threatened me into compliance, Pierce Shea; I suppose you know me well enough to believe that neither yourself nor any man alive can bully *me*."

"I know and believe it; that's enough for

you, Doran; go on now, and, for the love of heaven, do not keep me in this torture."

"Well, remember you forced me to speak out, in spite of my wish and inclination."

"I will, I will remember; I acquit you beforehand of all share in the pain or injury your words may inflict; only be plain and aboveboard, and do a friend's duty by me."

"Why, then, since you must have it, my poor fellow, 'tis thought that, if Alley's not charmed and blindfolded by something not right, she lives with her father's murderer, of her own free consent."

"Aye," said Pierce, during the pause which Doran here made, as if to note the effect of his news on the hearer; "aye, I guessed what would come out;" he spoke in a stifled voice, his hands clenched on the table, and his eyes fixed on his friend.

"For," continued Doran, "unless the villain has her in some strong hold, or prison, and that's no way likely, seeing that their retreat is in the neighbourhood, and that none of us have ever heard of such a place, surely she could long ago have made her escape, during one or other of the occasions when Crohoore was absent, and you know yourself he has often been absent, and

night after night no watch on her; surely the girl might have easily ran home to you, if, as I said before, she isn't either——"

"Where did you hear all this?" interrupted Shea, still successful in a strong effort to keep down his feelings.

"From friends of your own, Pierce: friends to the marrow of their bones, who are not afraid or ashamed to repeat their words to your face, and do more, may be, if along with their regard for you they saw reason why: you know the boys I mean."

"I do," said Shea, his eyes now turned away and fixed in stupified abstraction on the floor.

"I have lately got them into good order and spirit," pursued Doran, "and never fear them for helping a friend, along with doing their own little business, if—" he again paused, and laid his hand on Shea's arm—"if that friend could be trusted, Pierce, my lad."

"May the good God of heaven defend me from the truth of what you say!"—at last exclaimed poor Shea, giving vent to the bitterness of soul that his friend's touch had, perhaps, freed from its hitherto stern self-command, —"*that, that* would be the heaviest stroke of all!—Doran, I could bear to see her a stiff

corpse, the cheek pale and cold, and the eye closed, never more to open—I could lean over her grave, and look in as she was lowered into it, and listen to the clod striking on her coffin,—but *that* I could not bear!—It would drive me mad—it has driven me mad!"—As he spoke, he grasped and desperately wrung Doran's hand, the tears choking his utterance and gushing down his face, and he now let fall his head upon his friend's extended arm.

"A heavy curse light on my tongue!" cried Doran, his voice also broken from emotion; "but Pierce, dear, sure it was only the people's thought—what they all say—and I, for one, don't believe a word of it."

"Dhar Dieu! you dare not believe it!" replied Pierce, starting on his feet, his tears scorched up, and his tone and manner entirely altered—"you dare not, man, believe a word of it, nor any thing like it; I will suffer no living creature to believe it of Alley; there never was a holy saint, standing before the throne of God in his glory, whiter from shame and sin than was my poor Alley! Deny it, you or any man, and I will send your soul to its Maker with the lie upon it!"

"I see you want somebody to quarrel with,"

said his companion, in an offended and reproachful tone, "but you shall not fix the quarrel on me; I feel for you and pity you too much, Pierce, to mind any thing you say to me in your present fury;—and is this my reward for all I have gone through, unasked, and of my own accord, for your sake and hers?—and when you were lying on your back, Pierce, not able to wag a finger in your own cause, and without another friend, or another fool, to stand up for you?"

The young man's brow relaxed, and the natural reflux of his better feelings again brought tears into his eyes, while he sat down, offered his hand, and said,

"I ask your pardon, my dear Doran; I should have recollected—if I *could* have recollected any thing—it was a friend that spoke."

"It was, Pierce," replied Doran, warmly returning his pressure; "and now put the foolish words out of your head; by the soul in my body I would not myself hear an ill word said of poor Alley; put the thing out of your mind; there is nothing in it."

"That will not be easy for me to do, Jack," said Pierce; and he was right; it was no easy task to pluck out the thorn that now festered in

his heart's core; he was never before, great as were the griefs and horrors he had encountered, so truly miserable. "But," he resumed, "you said something, just now—what was it?—I heard your very imperfectly—of your friends having it in their power to be of use to me; how, Doran? and what do you mean?"

"It's now useless talking it over, Pierce; but all they have told me I'll tell you; and more you cannot expect. They give me to understand, in the first place, that they have a clue to Crohoore's retreat—"

"Where?—where?—how have they been able to discover it? I thought they had long ago given up all interference in the matter."

"You see, Pierce, that was when I had little or no command over the boys, and when I was only getting by degrees into their good opinion, and they were without much union or courage; but now that I am their lawful captain for the parish of Clarah, and have led them on one or two little expeditions, with every success, their spirit is up, and their services at my beck, under certain terms that you alone can take or leave; so that they are no fools, and don't care a blackberry for fairy or tithe-proctor, and would just face the ould lad with his horns on. As

to where and how they made this discovery, I do not know; in fact they have not made me the wiser, nor can I insist on a point that has nothing to do with our lawful business; only this much they say, that if you, Pierce Shea, will step in among them, one of these fine evenings, and behave like the lad of metal they and I know you to be, it will go hard but in a night or two Alley will stand before you, and Crohoore-na-bilhoge have his lodging in the stone jug in Kilkenny."

"What do they want me to do?—join them?—take an oath?" asked Pierce, after a pause.

"Whisht, man—walls have ears;—never mind particulars, now; only can't you just hear what the poor gorçoons have to say to you, and then judge for yourself?"

"Where are they to be found?"

"I can find them for you; we may as well look for them together," said Doran, carelessly: "but follow your own bent, Pierce, a-vich; I wish to advise you to nothing, one way or the other."

"How soon can we meet? to-morrow night?"

"To-morrow night, sure enough, they will be near at hand; about ten, I think."

"Very well," muttered Pierce, dropping his

head on his breast, and again relapsing into silence; but his set teeth, his rigid features, and his unsteady eye, shewed the agitated nature of his reflections. After an unbroken pause of more than two minutes, he rose quickly, snatched a candle, and repeated—

"Very well;—let us go together; and you had better be out of the house at the time, Doran, waiting for me at the broad stone in the bosheen, to escape my father's suspicions: good night."

"I will," said Doran, "but cannot wait long: good night;" they joined hands.

"You shall not wait a moment; my mind is made up; I'll engage in any thing—any risk, any fellowship—I would rush on death—hell—for present satisfaction and ease of mind;—ten, you say?"

"Ten, exactly; good night, Pierce." They exchanged a hearty shake of hands, and retired to their separate chambers.

At ten o'clock the next night, and by the broad stone in the bosheen, the friends accordingly met. Few words were exchanged between them; and Doran rapidly led the way, often stopping to look about him, over lonesome and broken paths, with which Pierce was not

well acquainted, until, after half an hour's forced march, they stood before a miserable hut, that was built in a deserted waste, covered with furze and rock, a hill rising at its back, and no other human habitation within view.

Light glanced through the chinky door, and through a hole, in the side of the hovel, that, as usual, served at once for window and chimney; and from within issued a confused clatter of wild mirth, loud talking, the dull music of the bag-pipes, and stentorian singing.

"There is the place," said Doran to his companion, as they paused some distance from the door. At the sound of his voice a tall figure started from behind a thick clump of furze and rock within a few paces of them, and asked,—"Who's there? and what sort o' night is in id?"—

"It's a fine night," answered Doran, in a whisper, though the clouds were low and swollen, the wind muttering, heavy drops falling, and not a star to be seen.

"An' so it is," said the challenger; "go your ways an' God be wid ye,"—and he instantly disappeared.

"Come on, then," Doran resumed, and they walked up to the door of the cabin.

"Stop a moment," said Pierce, as his friend felt about the door for the knotted string that moved the wooden latch—"I did not quite expect this; I do not like to enter such a place."

"Nonsense,—thrash—childishness!" retorted Doran in a quick sharp tone—"the heart to change now! doubts and fears to come now!—what can you fear in my company? are you a man?"

He held him by the breast of the coat with one hand, with the other violently pulled up the heavy latch, the door swung wide open, and they walked in briskly.

There was an immediate cessation of all sounds among the inmates of the cabin, and eight or ten men springing up, and thrusting their hands into their bosoms, shewed, by their scowling brows and ferocious looks, nothing of hospitable welcome to the supposed intruders, until Doran's pass-word, "It 's fine weather, boys," and their instant recognition of him, caused a universal relaxation of feature, and "cead mille phalthea, Rhia Doran," was shouted in no gentle accents from every tongue. When the enthusiasm of his welcome had somewhat abated, Pierce observed glances of constraint, if not of suspicion, at himself; but as soon as Doran, sitting, or

rather resting with one thigh on a rude table, round which the men were grouped, and assuming an air of careless good-fellowship, as he looked about him, had passed something in a quick whisper, room was made for Shea; and "sha-dhurth, a-bouchal,"* addressed to him, as in rapid succession they quaffed their liquor, proved that his friend, or his own name, had sufficient influence to change into cordiality and interest whatever disagreeable feeling his entrance might have caused; in fact, the men lost all constraint before him, abandoning themselves, in a few moments, to their natural manners, and noisy humour.

Being seated, he had leisure to examine the kind of place in which he was, and the description of persons amongst whom he found himself. The whole extent of the interior of the hovel was a single apartment, not exceeding fifteen feet in length and ten in breadth, and scarcely of sufficient height to allow a tall man to stand erect in the middle of the floor; the mud walls were unplastered; and the straw that had been mixed with this primitive material, to keep it together, startled and bristled out at every side; over head the puny wattles of the roof,

* "Your health, lad."

black, and shining with smoke and soot, badly connected the inartificial covering of heath; the floor, full of inequalities of bedded stone and uneradicated furze, differed but little from the open moor without, from which it had only recently been deducted; and every thing, in fact, shewed a hasty and careless construction.

Close by one wall ran a rough deal plank, supported by piles of loose stones, forming the seats upon which, at a narrow table, about a dozen men were crowded; and, at its other side, large stones, without any plank or board, supplied seats to some half dozen more. There was no chimney; but two benches, built of slate and clay, enclosed an area, within which a few sods of turf emitted a feeble blaze; and sitting very near, crippled up into a lump, her knees reaching higher than her head, her bleared eyes steadfastly fixed on the decaying embers, and her whole air and position shewing an unconsciousness or carelessness of the dinning noise, was the hostage of this lowly *auberge*. In the corner to her left appeared an enclosure of rough stones that fenced in the heath on which she lay; and, in the other, a roughly-constructed and uncouthly-shaped barrel, from which, by the agency of spigot and fauset, she

drew, in wooden noggins, and as her guests claimed it, the stout though now exploded shebeen.

At one side of Pierce Shea, and immediately next him, sat a prim-looking little fellow of middle age, with a large, bloated, goat's-hair wig, that, cocking up behind like a drake's tail, left the roots of his skull visible, with a red silk handkerchief under his neck, remarkable, when contrasted with the bare and scorched throats and breasts of the others; and altogether he had a way about him very different from, if not superior to his companions; a look of self-defined and long-established importance and wisdom; as well he might, being by day the only schoolmaster of the district, and, by night, the only writer of notices, regulations, and resolutions, and orator in general to the reformers of Clarah, as Clootz was to the human race. Opposite to him, in appearance as well as situation, sat a tall, bony, squalid being, of a meagre sallow face, hung round with an abundance of coal-black hair, bent brows of the same sable hue, shading deep, wild eyes, his beard four weeks unshaven, and his habiliments from head to foot, only the tattered remains of a vesture, that, in its best day, had been but in-

different. Pierce thought he should recollect to have before seen this man, in the following situation.

Passing by a cabin, which it was known the tithe-proctor had recently spoliated, a heavy shower of rain overtook him, and he knocked at the door for admission, supposing it to be secured. A husky voice desired him to come in; he did so, and beheld such a scene of misery as his eyes had never before experienced. The large, waste den, with its sides rough as a quarry, and the black roof dripping rain and soot, did not contain a single article of the most common domestic furniture: and on a small bundle of straw, at one side, lay a shivering girl of nine or ten years, while two other children, a boy and girl, not more than five and six, squatted on the damp, clay floor, which was strewed with straw and rushes, not in childish sport, but in that prematrue melancholy and abstraction that the children of want and misery so often exhibit to the eye of a susceptible beholder. For some time he saw no other human creature, and, addressing one of the children, asked suddenly, "have you no father?"

The same hoarse voice that had spoken before he entered now made answer in a kind of scof-

fing laugh from the chimney corner. "To be sure they have 'em, why shouldn't they?"

Pierce turned towards the place: there was no fire on the hearth; but upon the hob, and deeply shaded by the projection of the huge chimney, sat a man about forty, without shoes, stockings, coat, or vest; a small-clothes and soot-stained shirt his only covering. His arms were folded hard, his chin sunk into his breast, his bare legs crossed, and he swang and jogged them to and fro, in action that betokened a sullen and desperate indifference to the ruin about him.

"Ay, there they is, now," he continued, as Pierce stared at him in silence: "one, two, three o' them; an' I'm their father, an' what am I to do wid 'em?"

"Where's their mother?" asked Pierce.

"Avoch, an' what a question you put on me; I went down the bosheen, yesterday, after the proctor left us, an' I tould 'em she was gaspin'; yes, I tould 'em my wife was gaspin', an' the good christhens wouldn't believe me; an' yet she was stiff afore me when I cum back, an' I buried her widout a wake, or a sheet to wind her in; an' see here—here's what she left me."

He stooped and took up a bundle of dark

rags, which, from the weak cries that immediately reached Pierce's ear, he discovered to be at once the cradle and swadling-clothes of a new-born infant. The man laid the babe on his lap, and added,

"'An' I'm to sit up all night an' watch this dawny bit iv a crature, and feed it, havin' nothin' more nor a few could phatees; aye, there's three o' them fur you, an' I'm their father, if you want to know id, an' what am I to do wid 'em? sure that's jist the way its wid me, a-vich."

Pierce was sure that this same man now sat before him. The rest of the company were not particularly distinguished, being young fellows, gay, heedless, and uncharacterized.

The table was covered with slops of liquor, and the whole behaviour and appearance of the men shewed they had been, for some time before Pierce's entry, trying the potency of the home-brewed ale, some of which Doran also procured for his friend and himself: as, with half a cake of oaten bread, it was the only refreshment the old "colluch"* could or would produce. Perhaps, joined to the riotous mirth that now went on, serious business had been in debate before the appearance of Shea; for he could

* Hag.

perceive that, in the midst of their wildest hilarity, whispers and looks occasionally went round; at all events he certainly missed the accompanying hubbub of the bagpipes, previously heard at the door; and hinting at the first circumstance, and particularly mentioning the last to his companion,

"Come, Murthock," cried Doran, slapping on the humpy shoulders a stupid-looking blind creature, who was seated apart from the others, and who, his music silent, seemed to have sunk into sympathizing non-entity, as if he had only existed while his instrument was at work, or as if the breath that gave him life had been blown into his lungs by one of its complex pipes, part of the stock by which it was itself vivified, and that, the one exhausted, the other must fade away: "Come, Murthock, strike up Andrew Carey, or Sheelin-a-gig, or something that's hearty."

The bent and lethargic figure instantly got a little motion, as the bellows gave the first puff, and he answered, "Hah! hah! I wouldn't doubt you, Rhia Doran; you war always the boy for my money; faith, an' I'll give you purty nate music as ever left a poor piper's bag:" then,

busily stirring his arm, he emitted a very dismal, and, as he played it, a very discordant air.

"Och, murther, murther, your pipes want a drink, Murthock, they're so sorrowful; here, man, take this, and try something that won't set us crying."

"Sha, sha, sha, Rhia Doran; you war never fond o' bein' sad yourself, an' small blame to you, fur your blood is hot an' sthrong;" he seized the noggin, and stretched his neck to have a good guzzle; "that was the White-boys' Lamentation;"—another draught;—"bud stay now 'till I give you the White-boys' Delight; here goes."

"Do so, Murthock; something that has fun in it, or by this blessed liquor I'll take you to the threshold, cut your bags, and let your music about the fields."

"Never fear," said Murthock, stirring his arm with somewhat quicker motion; though he only repeated the former air (if air it might be called which air had none) in more jigging time; in truth, except in the instance of his having been born blind, nature never intended Murthock for a musician; his strains did not fail, however, to impose on his audience, and

inspire them with many a vociferous shout, at which, well pleased, the creature smiled in self-flattery, and then plied his bellows with might and main, so that his chanter squeaked more and more shrilly, and his drone grunted more and more deeply, as if in ill humour with its own music; the whole effect not unlike a noise to which, we believe, it has sometimes been locally compared, namely, a litter of young pigs making clamourous demands on their poor worn-out dam, which, in gruff expostulation, she admits or rejects.

Pierce had sat down among these people unwillingly, and with a mind unfit to mix in such a scene of loud and rude merriment; but the noggins were often and often emptied to his long life, and reign, and health, and he could not fail to pledge his companions in as oft repeated draughts. We have heard experienced sages complain (as who has not?) that the miserable thin potation of our degenerate day is nothing to the substantial shebeen of the days that are gone; and Pierce Shea felt and proved the truth of half at least of this assertion. After the ice of temperance and self-command is once broken, there is no heartier tippler than a sorrowful man; the sudden and wild relief he has

received he will wildly endeavour to keep up, and this can only be done by successive libations; so, Pierce drank on as rapidly as any around him; felt his heart grow lighter and lighter; and at last, to Murthock's extreme consolation, became as noisy as any other man in the hovel,

In the midst of his utmost enjoyment, the little rustic prig, who sat by his side, laying his hand on Pierce's arm, said,

"Bud, musha my poor boy, that's thrue—you're still in the hunt for Alley Doolin', we hear; an' isn't id a strange thing to be supposed, an' a shameful thing to be hard spoken of, that you're livin' to this day of your life among the neighbours, an' never joined yourself to the jolly lads, that, sayin' nothin' o' their glory in the good cause, are the only livin' sowls to help you to a sight iv her?"

Pierce was about to reply with much vivacity, when one of the young peasants, commencing by a prefatory yell, sung out—"Yes!—

"They must lave off their tithin' an rackin' iv acres,
Or we'll roast 'em as brown as a loaf at the baker's;
An' we'll nip off their ears, an' we'll lave their heads bare,
As they do wid the calves in the county Kildare."

These lines were chorussed by the whole set,

at a mad shouting pitch of voice, that made the wattles of the roof ring again, and Pierce could scarce get in his earnest question of—"Do *you*," to the little man,—"or do any of you know where Alley Dooling is to be found?"

"Fair an' asy, now," replied the schoolmaster, who seemed by general consent, or undisputed privilege, to be official spokesman, "for it's fair an' asy that goes far in the day; do we know any thing iv your sweetheart, is id? May be we do, may be we don't; an', case we do, what's the raison, I say once agin that you're not like a son o' green Ireland, the crature, doin' as mooch as you can, an' sorry in your heart that you can't do more, against the rievin,' plundherin', murtherin' rapperies o' tithe proctors, the bitther foes iv ould Ireland's land;—slingin' at home, becase the blow doesn't sthrike hard on yourself, an' never heeding the moans o' the poor neighbours, that are left to starve, or rot like ould horses in the ditches, becase the sassenach clargy, that doesn't care a crooked sthraw for them or theirs, must have grand houses to live in, brave horses to hunt, coaches to take their pleasure in, an' costly fastes, where there's the mate iv all kinds, every day in the year, Fridays an' all, an' wine galore to dhrink"

—the orator paused in his set speech, now for the hundredth time repeated, to ply his noggin, as speaking is dry work, and with a bitter and indignant regret, no doubt, that his was not the wine to which he had alluded—"why, you don't look like a boy that 'ud be a sprissaun, or afeard to do a thing becase a bit o' danger might lie in the way?"

He here made another pause, as if inviting some reply; and, as Pierce looked up to speak, he observed a leer on the face of the younger part of the assembly, which he suspected might be interpreted into scorn of his want of spirit, hinted at in the latter part of the pedagogue's address: his eyes, rapid as lightning, glanced on Doran,—who all this time continued his half-sitting posture at one end of the table, coolly tapping it with a switch,—to assertain whether or not the general sneer was borrowed from him; but his friend's countenance betrayed no mark of any thing insulting or disagreeable; then, knitting his brows, and looking hard at the fellow who wore the broadest grin—

"Is there any man here," he asked, "who dares to question my courage, or say I fear danger?" The lad, immediately apprehending his meaning, changed at once the expression of

his features, and thrusting his hand in amity across the table, "Never a one 'ud say id to your father's son, master Pierce, à-bouchal," he exclaimed; "but," assuming a jocose cast of face, and winking at Pierce, while he nodded at the orator, "there's one thing Mourteen left out in his noration, an' myself was goin' to put in his mind, that it's from us, poor cratures iv Romans that we are,—*go vioch a Dieu uriv!**—it's from us, an' we have the sin iv id on our heads, the sassenach clargy takes what buys the mate they ates iv a Friday, an' will we be afther lettin' 'em do a thing that no christhen sowl 'ud do, barrin' he was a dog?"

"Whoo! by my sowkens," said another, "that's the worst o' the story; arrah, Mourteen, what made you forget that?"

"Musha, how can a body think iv every thing at once?" said a third, "an, tho' Mourteen happened to spake about the *mishnoch*† o' the boy, it's well known that if he war as handy at every thing as he is at the tongue, the divil himself, Lord save us, couldn't stand afore him."

But old Mourteen, nothing discountenanced at this raillery, and looking upon himself as

* God look down on us. † Courage, or spunk.

much above them as mind is above matter, only vouchsafed a scornful glance at his boyish companions, and, pulling down his wig with both hands, prepared to conclude his speech, while they, leaning forward on their elbows, put on faces of mock gravity and attention. In fact, Mourteen prided himself on his eloquence, and never failed to exercise it when good occasion offered: and the opportunity of haranguing and converting Pierce was too rare and too favourable to be neglected. He had enlisted many in the war against tithe-proctors, and so far was valued; but like his great prototype, the Athenian orator, Mourteen was rather the cause of courage in others than distinguished for that virtue in his own person; in one word, his friends knew him to be a rank coward; and at this constitutional weakness the shafts of their satire were now directed. Pierce, however, unacquainted with the fact, and not understanding the humour of the party, listened attentively to the conclusion of Mourteen's lecture, which ran as follows:

"Hasn't the sassenach clargy, I say, all Ireland to himself every tenth year, while the world is a world, an' sure, if he had a conscience along wid id, *that* might be enough, an' not for to

send the bloody proctor on our back, to lift the double o' that, again; to take the food from our mouths, our christhen mouths, an' the rag o'coverin' from our beds an' our bodies; an' our own poor clargy, God bless 'em, that kept wid us in want an' sorrow, an' cums to us night an' mornin', thro' wet an' dhry, could an' hardship, to stand by our sick beds, an' make christhen souls in us,—what do they get but the bits an' scraps, the scrapins and lavins the sassenach laves behind; the sassenach that rises the hire widout arnin' id, robbin' id from them that does; the sassenach that thought to tear and burn us up, root an' branch; that hunted our sogarths like bastes o' the field, an' hung an' shot them an' all iv us, just because we said our prayers afther the fashion o' them that went afore us, an' cum after us, and 'ill do the same for ever an' ever, amin, praise God, and thank God that laves us the wondher to tell that we're here to do id at all—musha, musha!"—Mourteen added, hastening his peroration from a misgiving of some slight confusion of ideas, and a dread of getting farther *bogged*—(as he would himself have called it) "musha, an' ochown-a-rie, it's enough to make a body run mad to think iv id!"

"I believe what you say is true," said Pierce,

in reply to this holding forth, and anticipating Mourteen's tormentors, who, with many a shrewd wink, were preparing to open their battery on the spokesman; "but my father has all along taught me to ask what I now ask you—how much good has come or can come from all you are able to do? little mischief to your real oppressors, and your own death upon the gallows, more certainly than the relief you look for."

His attention was here rivetted by the miserable man opposite to him, who, at once, with that violence of action and furious contortion of countenance for which the Irish peasant is remarkable, poured out a speech in his native tongue, adopting it instinctively as the most ready and powerful medium of expressing his feelings; for one who boggles, and stammers, and is ridiculous in English, becomes eloquent in Irish: we follow the speaker in translation, which will necessarily shew none of the rude *patois* he must have betrayed had he attempted, as all the others did, to display his feelings in a language almost unknown to them and him. "Who talks of the good we can do?—we look not to do good; we are not able nor fit to do good; we only want our revenge!—And that, while we are men, and have strong hands,

and broken hearts, and brains on fire with the memory of our sufferings—that we can take. Your father, young man, never writhed in the proctor's gripe; he has riches, and they bring peace and plenty, so that the robber's visit was not felt or heeded; but look at me!"—With the fingers of one hand he pressed violently his sallow and withered cheek, and with the other tore open the scanty vesture, that, leaving him uncovered from the shoulders to the ribs, exhibited a gaunt skeleton of the human form—"I have nothing to eat, no house to sleep in; my starved body is without covering, and those I loved and that loved me, the pulses of my heart, are gone; how gone, and how am I as you see me?—Twelve months ago I had a home, and covering, and food, and the young wife, the mother of my children, with me at our fire-side; but the plunderer came on a sudden; I was in his debt; he has a public-house, and he saw me sitting in another in the village; he took my cow, and he took my horse; he took them to himself; I saw them—and may all ill-luck attend his ill-got riches!—I saw them grazing on his own lands; I was mad; every thing went wrong with me; my landlord came, and swept the walls and the floor of my cabin;

my wife died in her labour;—who was to stand up for me?—where had I a friend, or a great one to help me?—No one; no where; there is no friend, no help, no mercy, no law for the poor Irishman; he may be robbed—stripped—insulted—set mad—but he has no earthly friend but himself!"

The wretch sprung from his seat, seized his vessel, and with the look and manner of a maniac, indeed, added—

"And here let every MAN pledge me! May *his* heart wither, and his children and name perish!—May the grass grow on his hearth-stone, and no kin follow his corpse to the grave, who will refuse to wreak on the hard-hearted proctors the revenge they provoke by the sorrows they inflict!"

All had arisen; even the old woman had stretched her wrinkled face and stringy neck into the circle, and, as the toast was quaffed, her shrill tones mingled with the hoarse "amen" that followed. In this moment of frenzy and inebriation,—his youthful sympathy in their cause grafted on the hope of recovering his mistress,—did Pierce Shea take the White-boys' oath, and with wild clamour was his inauguration celebrated.

"And now," said Doran, when the uproar had somewhat subsided, speaking in a calm and earnest voice and manner, "listen to me, all: I appoint Pierce Shea my first lieutenant for the Parish of Clarah; are all content?"—

A general hurrah, joined with new congratulations, shaking of his hand, and drinking to his health, was the answer.

"And you freely accept the commission?" Doran resumed, fixing his eye on Shea, and proffering his hand also.

"I accept it; but—no matter!—I accept it unconditionally; I join you for your own sakes; for your cause, your wrongs, and your revenge; for your success or failure—for good or ill—redress or the gallows."

"It is enough," said Doran, violently squeezing Shea's hand, while his eyes sparkled and his cheeks grew pale with strong emotion.

"Meantime," resumed Pierce, "let me fairly own that another motive first led me this evening among you."

"We know what you mane," interrupted Mourteen, "an' are ready an' willin' to remember id; sure one good turn desarves another."

"You all know my situation, men," said Pierce, after a pause, dropping his head on his

hand, to hide the overflowing tears that a moment's recurrence to his personal misfortunes rendered irresistible.

"We do, we do," they cried out, "an' it's the hearts in our bodies that are achin' for you, Masther Pierce, à-roon; an' wait 'till we show you so mooch, widout more talkin' about id."

"It's only thought an' expected," continued Mourteen, "that our new lieutenant 'ill cum wid us one night, just to make clear an' clane his good wishes for the cause, an' the next night will bring him sthraight a-head on Crohoore-na-bilhoge."

"That's id; that's the very thing," the men repeated.

"I shall not fail," answered Pierce.

"Then, I believe," said Doran, "our business for to-morrow night is to call, out of love and kindness, on Peery Clancy, the friend of poor Terence Delany here," nodding at the man who had harangued them in Irish.

"Life will be spared?" asked Pierce.

"Life and limb; unless ears are legs or arms," answered Doran; and Pierce objected or questioned no further; though he saw a grim smile of disagreeable expression on the features of Terence Delany.

"An' in throth," said one of the young fellows, "I'm tould the poor man is hard o' hearin'; a great pity, sure, when it's a thing so asy to be righted; fur there is nothin' in the wide world to do, but just crop the ears as close to the head as a body can, an' I'll take my swear he'll hear a Whiteboy, at any rate, fur a good mile o' ground, as long as he lives, ever afther."

"Musha, that 'ill be no more nor a christhen turn," said another; "fur who wouldn't pity a poor body that's deaf, like him? an' Bryan Whichpatrick must scrawb him a good tune on the fiddle, when he gets the gift o' hearin'."

They had attached to their body a man of the name here mentioned, or rather of a name like it, *Fitz*-patrick being its true pronunciation, who was their poet and musician, and who always added effect to their processions, when they paraded a poor proctor to the place of his punishment.

"Aye," said Mourteen, "an' we may as well plant him in the ground up to his chin just to see if he'd sprout into an honest man."

"Aroch, there's little fear o' that," he was answered; "fur if you war to sow an acre o'

proctors, the duoul a worse crop could a poor body have to look at in the harvest time."

"Och, an' have a care boys," said another, "bud they'd grow up into a nate crop o' hemp, that 'ud make caravats fur some iv us, as asy as we're takin' id."

Thus in the spirit of that peculiar levity and jeer which the Irish peasantry mingle with the feeling and execution of their very hardships, despair, and revenge, did they discuss the business of the night, until Doran, rising up and smartly rapping the table, said,

"Come, come, enough for to night; every man quietly and by himself to his home,—if he has one; Murthock, don't sleep over your part of the work; be careful to warn all the boys; you're better at it than at your music, my good fellow."

"Hah! hah! Rhia Doran; you're welcome to your joke; bud, afore to-morrow night, all the boys in the parish 'ill know id, plaise God, iv Murthock does be a live piper."

Upon this, the council broke up, and Pierce and Doran returned to old Shea's house.

CHAPTER X.

When Pierce Shea had slept away his intoxication, and with it the enthusiasm it had excited, he awoke to feel the goadings of an upbraiding conscience; for he recollected he had broken his father's most positive injunction. The old man's good sense early perceived that the acts committed by the Whiteboys, even divested of their immoral and cruel character, could only, in the end, bring ruin on themselves. He was rich, as Terence Delany remarked, and the tithe-proctor had been to him but the cause of a pecuniary loss, which, however unwillingly he might have suffered it, was in itself of little inconvenience: his passions escaped, therefore, undue agitation, and his reason exercised a comparatively unbiassed sway.

Pierce was a dutiful son, as well from principle as inclination; his father was, to his only child, a fond and good father, and, exclusive of the affection this ensured in a warm and virtuous heart, he entertained the highest opinion

of his parent's good sense; it was, therefore, afflicting to him to reflect on what he had done, in joining an association, from all intercourse with which the paternal voice had repeatedly commanded and warned him; in addition to his other causes of unhappiness, the thought made him very wretched; and when, the next night, he stole with a felon's step from his father's roof to assist in an illegal outrage, a foreboding of heavy and retributive evil to follow caused his heart to sink in his bosom.

But he had solemnly sworn to obey his captain in all things, and a refusal to comply with the present order, Pierce shuddered to think, might lay the sin of perjury on his soul. His courage and consistency, too, would at once be questioned; and then came the strongest and most beguiling argument of all—his conduct on this night was to aid in discovering and releasing his mistress, and in dragging to punishment the murderer of her parents. Right or wrong, it was a sacrifice called for at his hands by the loudest voice of love, duty, and necessity; and so he braced himself to concede to it, like a man to whom desperate recourses are the only alternative.

Doran awaited, and joined him at a short

distance from his father's house; wearing over his clothes a shirt, the distinguishing garb of the fraternity, whence was derived their denomination of White-boys, and armed with two pistols secured in a belt, whilst at his back was slung a huge bullock's-horn, which, besides being used to sound the different signals, was a badge of command worn only by leaders. Pierce, according to orders, had also provided himself with a shirt, horn, and arms, which being now adjusted, the friends set out at a brisk pace.

Even to Doran, Shea disguised his real feelings, apprehensive that any doubt or misgiving might be construed into pusillanimity or cowardice, terms ever most humiliating and distressing to a young man's ear; he even forced himself to affect the swagger of a bravo, than which nothing could be more loathsome to his mind and spirits, while Doran volubly rehearsed, half in laughter, the feats and glories that night to be realized.

After some smart walking, they ascended an eminence, about half a mile from Pierce's home, where Rhia Doran, putting his gigantic horn to his mouth, blew a deafening blast, that—our veracious old chroniclers have often assured us,—could be distinctly heard at the distance of three

Irish miles, if the night was still, and the low breeze favourable. In an instant he was answered from other eminences, contiguous and far off, and all around; and a final flourish, that startled the ear of night, in the low country, almost at their feet, terminated the signals.

"And now, lieutenant, to the place of muster!" said Doran; and, descending the hill together, they approached a number of men who were assembled in a field at a little distance. As the friends joined them, others were seen scrambling or leaping over fences on every side, all garbed like themselves, but only a few with horns and weapons, the majority being unbadged and unarmed. After a short pause the muster seemed completed; they gathered in silent bustle round Doran and Shea, and the former inquired,

"Is every thing ready with you, boys?"

"All right, an' nate, an' purty, captain, agra, an' in our glory," he was answered.

"The nags, then!" cried Doran. They ran to the four corners of the field, or jumped into the adjoining one, and every man returned holding a horse, that had been pressed from different farms on their route, nor were the worst put in requisition. The two finest and grandest steeds

having been presentnd to Doran and Shea, the leader at once mounted, exclaiming,

"Well then, jolly boys as ye are, up and ram along; and the divil take the hindmost for his supper!"

All were instantly on horseback, and with a stifled, though general "hurra!" dashed off at full speed, first, over the hedges and fences immediately around them, then, sometimes over a bit of road, if it happened to come in the way, but for the most part over hedge and ditch, again, hill and hollow, stream and bog, like mad and evil spirits careering with the night-blast, their hoarse and guttural "hurra!" still occasionally breaking out in wild and unearthly cadence.

Few accidents occurred on this headlong ride, and those of no importance, if it be taken into consideration that, with the exception of Doran and Shea, no man of the party sat in saddle, nor had even a bridle to direct or govern his steed; blessed was he that boasted so much as a halter; and it must be allowed that under such disadvantages they displayed considerable skill in horsemanship; much more, we are inclined to think, than a regularly drilled squadron of dragoons would shew, if similarly accoutred and situated.

And "hurra! hurra!" they still muttered as they still swept along, until, after somewhat more than an hour's mad driving, the horses began to stumble and totter from fatigue. Then Doran's voice was again heard.

"We ought to be near upon the place for a change," he said to those immediately around him.

"At the foot o' the rath afore you, captain," was the answer.

He sounded his horn, and was promptly answered from the direction pointed out, and, spurring and lashing, he set the example of one desperate push to gain the point of relief.

"Faultha, faultha,* to the rattlin' boys that dhrive by night!" was shouted by many voices, as at last they came up the destined hill.

Doran instantly flung himself from his saddle, asking, "How many horses have you?"

"Five-an'-forty, captain, you darlin' o' fellows."

"Enough; and enough is as good as a feast:" then turning to Pierce, during an instant's delay in changing their saddles, "Come, lieutenant, your hand; by the blessed moon you are a brave White-boy, already!" the girths were

* Welcome, welcome.

now tightened, the bridle flung to him, and he was again on horseback in a twinkling, adding, to the party that had met them, "We'll be here again in an hour, be sure to have bastes ready;" and "up, and ram along, boys!" was again the word, and onward all again dashed at the same furious rate as before.

At last they entered amid a few straggling huts, built at irregular distances, and in disorderly lines, dignified by the inbabitants with the name of a village. The stillness and sobriety of night prevailed; no light gleamed from the wretched cabins, and the hour of labour and life seemed to have sunk in repose; yet, as they clattered along, door after door was stealthily opened, half-dressed figures, male and female, appeared at each, and the oft-repeated salutation of "*Dieu liuve a-voucheeleen,*"* uttered in that bitter and gurgling tone in which they would have set their mastiffs on a detested enemy, told that the mission of the riders was understood and appreciated; and when they reached the forge, or smithy, a man issuing thence with candles, a lighted sod of turf, and a sledge, proved that they had been duly expected.

* God speed you, lads.

"Is the ould bird in the nest?" asked Doran of this person, as he pulled up.

"Och, an' that he is, snug an' warm, an' waitin' fur you, captain, a-chorra."

"Well; that's civil and dacent of him, after all, poor sowl—shew the way, Thady."

There was a house standing apart from the others, distinguished from them as well by its station as by its great superiority of extent and appearance; through its thatched roof protruded a forked stick, to which appended a sign board, that, had it been day-light, might be seen to boast a dull raddle ground, with a black shape thereon, having, very necessarily and wisely, "The Black Bull" painted in black letters above its head and beneath its feet: and lower down still was also painted.

	mint
	Enthertain
for man and horse—	
— — — — —	

At the door of this doomed abode, the party stopt; it was the residence of Terence Delany's undoer, and the same swaggering tithe-proctor whose portrait we have before attempted to sketch.

With the utmost possible silence, the party

ranged themselves about the house, so as to prevent escape, and then, having lighted their candles, by blowing at the red turf, one clash from the eighteen pound sledge burst the door open. Doran, and three others, who were armed, rushed in, Pierce being left in command of the main body outside. The visitors took their measures so well and so speedily, that they seized on the terrified proctor as he crept under the bed from which he had just arisen.

"Arragh, then, crawl back wid yourself, here, my ould bouchal," said one of the men, as he dragged him by the legs into the middle of the room.

"An' isn't it a burnin' shame," cried another, "to see a responshible, well-doin' body, like you, go fur to hide yourself like a chree-chrawtha, afther we comin' so far a journey to see you? Foch upon you! to sarve your own cousins in sich a way, in your own house,"

"Mostha, becase he does so shabby by us, it's a long day 'till we cum see him agin," said a third.

"In throth, Peery, agra, it's little right you have to give us the *neen-sha-sthig*;* fur your mother's people, and that's oursefs, that

* Not at home.

are all come o' the Mulcahys, is an auld dacent stock."

"Don't be spakin' to our cüseen afther that fashion; mysef is a'most sure, by the pleasant face that's on him, he's glad in the heart to have us undher his roof this blessed night."

Such was the mockery bandied from one to another, while the unfortunate man sat stupified in the middle of the room, looking around him in hopelessness and horror, and in dreadful anticipations of the tortures he well knew awaited him. Twice had he been admonished to rise, without shewing any sense of the words addressed to his ear, until at last a smart application of Doran's whip to his shoulders, and the shrill tones and terrible words of, "Come out for your tithing, Peery!" that accompanied the blow, roused him from his lethargy. But he only clasped his hands and cried for mercy; and when by main force the three men proceeded to carry him out, his instinctive struggles for freedom only called down, again and again, an answer from Doran's whip.

"Och, gentlemen, gentlemen, honies, take pity on a poor man!" he repeated, as they bore him over his own threshold.

"Asy now, Peery; considher wid your con-

science; an' don't be axin' from us the thing you never yet had for man or baste, your own sef," was the reply, that shewed how little commiseration he had to expect.

Outside the door, Doran refreshed his men with some liquor, for which he had ransacked the house, and then proceeded to put them in order of procession. First he called for Bryan Fitzpatric, poet and musician to the body, as has before been mentioned, who manufactured all their songs, and who was so intimately acquainted with the muses, that, by their assistance, he gave his own history; beginning thus—

"Och! sure 'twas from the sweet county of Leithrim I came,
An' I plays on the fiddle, Bryan Fitzpatrick by name."

A most important personage on show occasions like the present, he now came forward at call to take rightful place at the van of the array. Peery Clancy, mounted on his own pampered gelding, had the next place; and immediately followed Captain Rhia Doran, with Shawn O'Burke, who had learned to emit from that most primitive, though unwieldy instrument, his bullock's horn, such a variety of strain, suited to every occasion, whether martial, triumphant, or pathetic, as with some created him a rival of Baron Fitzpatrick, muse, fiddle, and all;

whilst, to the unprejudiced ear, his variations equalled, at least, the different transitions from high and low lowing, to high and low bellowing, once practised by the animal to which his instrument had originally been an appendage. Shawn rode at the right hand of the captain: at the left was Yemen O'Nase, "the finisher of the law;" the rest, brought up by Pierce, followed in what order they might. At the first movement from the house, Bryan Fitzpatrick drew his fiddle-stick, and was instantly seconded by Shawn O'Burke, whose doleful blate certainly outdid his competitor, in every way, on this occasion; heretofore, whatever Bryan lost in loudness and power, he had been enabled to make up by melody; but now he only produced a most unaccountable noise, and, in pure comparison with noises, a contemptible one; truth is, he had been so unlucky as to tumble from his horse during the rapid ride, and, to his great consternation, when he uncased his fiddle, it appeared wofully disabled by the accident, one side being battered in, and all the strings snapped across; his only resource was, in the short pause afforded, to knot together two lengths at random, each of which he afterwards found was composed of different scraps

of different strings, first, second, third, and base, as they came to his fingers;—the result we have described. But, as the troop passed along in order, the loud shouting of the men rose for his relief, drowning, as the outcry rent the air, his pitiful minstrelsy; the inmates of the hovels, at their doors, or lying on their straw, joined the uproar, and even the shrill scream of women, and the tiny pipes of children, could be distinguished; there was no pity for Peery Clancy.

They arrived at the place where he was to undergo his punishment. History, the faithful mirror of truth, the rigid chronicler of facts, proceeds in her duteous detail without consideration for the squeamishness of nerves; among other instances of the principle, the legal retribution visited on Damien and Ravaillac has found its careful registrars; nor, in this transcript of real scenes, shall the illegal violence done to an Irish tithe-proctor want true and courageous historians: therefore proceed we in the circumstances.

Conformably with the other preparations, a grave was dug for the proctor's reception, close by a hedge in a contiguous field; in this he was laid, and covered with loose earth to the chin;

and then did Yemen O'Nase, who, like Shylock, had for some time been busily occupied sharpening upon a flat stone the broad blade of his pruning-knife, advance, and, in the in-felt pride of being a dexterous operator, exclaim,

"Well; we're all ready; an' it 's a sweet bit of a blade that's in you, for one knife; och, bud it isn't none o' your blades that's fit for nothin' but cuttin' butther; I gi' you my conscience, this holy an' blessed night, 'twould take the horns iv a ten-year-ould bull, not to spake iv a poor proctor's ears, though them same does be hard enough in regard of all the prayers they won't hear, an' all the lies they tell; come, come," interrupting himself, as he knelt down to his work, "none o' your ochowns, Peery; don't be the laste unasy in yoursef, a-gra; you may be right sartin I'll do the thing nate an' handy; tut, man," in reply to a shrill scream, "I'd whip the ears iv a bishop, not to talk of a crature like you, a darker night nor this; divil a taste I'd lave him: an' wouldn't bring any o' the head wid me, neither—Musha, what ails you at all?" after he had half accomplished his task; "you'd have a betther right to give God praise for gittin' into the hands iv a clever boy, like me, that—stop a bit, now—that 'ud only do his

captain's orders, an' not be lettin' the steel slip frum your ear across your wind-pipe, Lord save the hearers—stop, I say—there, now; wasn't that done purty?"

"Why, Peery," said another, "bear in mind that it's all fur the good o' your poor sowl we're so kind to you; sure there's no doubt at all that the proctors, every mother's son o' them, go sthrait-a-head to the divil; but I'll be bould to say that Peery Clancy, that was buried,—an' a dacent berrin he got, wid his own people around him,—an' Peery Clancy, that 'ill be afther him, won't be the same body, at-all-at-all, in regard that one had wings to his head, an' the t'other not one in the world; you won't be the same man, only some one else; an', more betoken, the penance o' this night 'ill be mighty good fur you in the time to come: take care o' yoursef there, a-vich."

"Good night, Peery; an' sure you have all the crop we can gi' you," added others.

"To make every thing sure," said Doran, "you must just swear as I desire you, Peery, or have Yemen at your throttle, along with your ears; give me the book."

A prayer-book was handed to him, which he

held to be kissed by the proctor, and the buried-alive swore never again to follow his unpopular profession. A sentinel was then placed over him, also sworn to release the sufferer in an hour.

"And now for the *sallin-na-morra!*" cried Doran; "strike up, Bryan; Shawn! your horn; attention, men, and chorus."

The *sallin-na-morra*, or death-prayers, was a celebrated chant, pathetico-ludicrous, composed and sung to his fiddle, by Bryan Fitzpatrick, on all such occasions as the present; and, while the party gathered round the proctor, it now arose, according to orders, first as a plaintive solo by the son of the muses, and then chorussed in terrific diapason by the whole body, joined to the utmost effort of Shawn's horn, and, indeed, of all the other horns present. After one encore, Doran flung himself on his horse, and his words, "up, and ram along!"—were the signal for the retreat of his troop, whose wild "hurrah!"—testified their triumph, and readiness to accompany him, as they at once vaulted on their bare-backed coursers; and away they set, over the ground they had already travelled, at the same savage speed in which they had arrived.

After driving some miles, Doran, who kept abreast with Shea, carelessly said—

"I'm sorry we have left the poor divil in Terence Delany's hands, after all."

"I was going to say the same thing," replied Pierce, "and to ask you if you think there is any danger of the unfortunate creature's life?"

"Heaven knows, not I; but you remarked the tone of his voice, and expression of his face, when he repeated my words, *to release* his prisoner in an hour?"

"I did; and for that very reason have my doubts; suppose we turn back?"

"Nonsense!" shouted Doran, with a laugh; do you suppose I could get my men to run the risk of any probable alarm that may now be spread in the neighbourhood? or that I would dare it on my own account? Let Terence and the proctor settle it together."

"No, Doran; we have already done enough—too much. I, at least, regret, and during the whole scene I regretted my share in such an unwarrantable and cruel outrage; and I, at least, will endeavour to prevent murder."

"Oh, very well, lieutenant; I have no wish or cause to order you from such a benevolent

turn; only it may now be too late; you intend riding back by yourself?"

"Have I much to fear for my own life, if I do? You said something of risk just now."

"Nothing of risk to a single man and horse, though; all is quiet, I believe; you didn't notice any one leave the house while you guarded it?"

"No,—good night," answered Pierce, checking and turning his horse towards the village.

"Good night, then, and let us see you soon; on, boys, on!"—and the friends galloped in opposite directions.

The last clang of the White-boys' horses, and the echo of their far harrah, were lost in distance to the victim's ear, and his faint moan was then the only sound that disturbed the silence of the night around him. Terence Delany, his guard, stood over him, speechless and motionless: even his breathing was not whispered by the still air. But, after a considerable pause, he walked a few paces to the fence near which the grave had been dug, and returned bent and panting with some heavy burden round which his arms were clasped; it was a huge stone; he stooped and laid it down beside the bleeding head.

Again he paused, and stood motionless; but at last his husky tones broke suddenly and ominously upon the dead calm; for the proctor's moans had subsided into the feeble breathings of exhaustion; he spoke, as was his almost invariable custom, in the Irish language, of which we will endeavour to give the substance, and turn of speech.

"Know you, Peery Clancy, who it is that stands over you in the lonesomeness and silence of this night?" The answer came also in Irish; "I know not whom you are; but, if you have a christian's soul, you will release me from this misery."

"Did you never bring it to your mind, and did the recollection of it never put your sleep astray, when, stretched on a bed of comfort, after a pleasant meal, that, by your deeds, Terence Delany, and his wife, and his three poor little children, were left houseless and hungry?"

"Oh! I am lost for ever!" moaned the wretched man.

"Hah! you know who stands over you, now! yes, you sunk them and me in poverty and the grave: you made me mad! and you now lie there, sure of the death-stroke from the arm of the mad-man you made!" The victim shrieked.

"Waste not your breath in idle cries; I will turn away, and give you a few minutes to make your prayer of God; when you hear my step again near you, cry mercy on your own soul."

He walked aside. By one of those singular coincidences which occur oftener than they are noticed, the face of night suddenly changed; the stars became extinguished, and the wind howled through the leafless branches. He turned his brow upwards, as if confusedly affected with the change; paused his time, in that position; but then, starting wildly, hurried back, and heedless of the frightful scream for life and mercy, felt with his foot for the exact situation of the head—stooped, and after many efforts raised the ponderous stone; poised it a moment over the mark;—when Pierce Shea bounded upon him from the other side of the hedge, forced him from his stand, and the rock fell, with a dull and hollow sound, harmless on the earth.

Delany instantly sprang on Shea, and with both hands griped his throat; Pierce seized him in return, and swang him about, but the iron grasp became firmer; the blood stopped and throbbed in his head, and could not circulate; so that breathing became a painful labour.

In a violent attempt to free himself, both fell to the ground, and Delany entangled and locked his legs with those of his adversary, who now felt the man's hold tightened more and more, and heard the gnashing of teeth at his ear, while the pang of suffocation closed on his heart. In a moment's rapid thought, however, Pierce recollected a sleight he had learned in wrestling, by which it was possible to release himself from the disabling bondage the murderer held over his legs; and using it therefore, and immediately after summoning an effort that the fear of death could alone supply, he sprung on his feet, bringing the other with him. This shook Delany's grasp; and Pierce, instantly relieved, bethought of another sleight, acquired also in the wrestling-ring; it was successful as the first; his enemy swung loose from him; and then a well-directed blow in the throat brought him down senseless.

The victor stood a moment, faint and staggering, before his strength or thoughts were sufficiently recruited to follow up his success; in good time, however, he recovered, to bind with his neck-cloth, handkerchief, and garters, the ankles and arms of the prostrate man; and then, the blood resuming its channel, and his

breath coming and going freely, he lost not a moment in shovelling the earth off the nearly expiring proctor, catching him in his arms, and conveying him with incredible speed to his own house, where, so soon as he had deposited his burden, he sunk himself, breathless and feeble with the unusual exertion and struggles he had made.

The near noise of horses' hoofs, recalled his senses to activity. At first he felt assured that his friends, anxious about his absence and danger, had come back to protect him; but a fear that the riders might be enemies, not friends, next sprung up in his mind, and he took refuge under the bed, on which he had just left the proctor, assured that, even if his worst surmise were true, the man whose life he had saved, at hazard of his own, would, by silence at least, shield him from present danger.

In a moment he heard the shrill tones of a boy calling out to some persons to follow, and soon after a party of dragoons, headed by a magistrate, clanked into the room. The boy, suspected to be a natural son of the proctor, had (not without the observation of Doran, whose after-question on the road to Pierce would seem to imply so much,) escaped from the

house, just as the White-boys had gained it, and, seizing a horse that grazed in a neighbouring field, set off for Kilkenny, where he gave notice of what was going forward, and quickly returned with civil and military aid.

To the questions put by the magistrate and dragoons to the proctor, as to the probability of apprehending any of the White-boys, Pierce, it may be supposed, listened with natural perturbation; and for some time the total silence of the person interrogated seemed to argue him safe from danger; but the proctor, at last breaking a silence that bodily pain and fatigue had alone caused, inquired whether or no he should be entitled to a reward for discovering a White-boy; and, when answered in the affirmative, poor Shea heard the ungrateful wretch immediately name the place of his concealment, and charge him as being one of those who had assisted at his torture; a fact fully corroborated by his white shirt and his arms, which in his hurry he had not thrown aside. The reward of his humanity, then, from the very person who owed him his existence, was, in a few seconds, to find himself a prisoner, with the dreadful certainty staring him full in the face of ending his life prematurely and ignominiously on the

gallows, when that life had so many great and tender claims upon it; and we think we cannot sound Pierce's praise more highly than by adding, that in this hour of trial—of outraged generosity and personal despair, he did not regret what he had done.

CHAPTER XI.

It were easier for the reader to imagine, than for us to describe—(and the remark is, by the way, an old ruse among us story-tellers, adopted, —when unable to trace, or comprehend distinctly enough for description, the various changes of the mind under strong and peculiar sensations,—in order to put the reader in good humour with our lack of ability, by thus slily complimenting him on his own superior discernment;) but, it were easier, we say, for the reader to imagine, than for us to describe, the thoughts and feelings of Pierce Shea, in his present novel and

appalling situation, when the next morning's dawn brought with it tardy remorse, and unavailing repentance. An habitual offender is in constant apprehension of the punishment he knows society has directed against those who violate its laws, and, when his career is at last about to be terminated, he is found in some degree prepared for the fate he had always dared and dreaded. This was not the case with Pierce. His life had been calm, and free from crime, and his participation in the acts that now subjected him to a dreadful and just death was a fatality rather than a choice. Forced into the White-boy association and expedition, by a master-motive very different from that which impelled the others, he spoke but the truth, when he declared to Doran that he was an unwilling spectator of the cruelties practised; in fact, he had not taken part in them, his heart all along commiserated the sufferer, and his present fate fully proved how sincerely. Poor Pierce's situation was therefore terrible; yet less from a fear of death than from overwhelming horror at the ignominy his public execution should entail on his father, his mother, and himself; he recollected, too, that the first step towards his fate was a breach of filial

duty and reverence; and Alley, for whom he had ventured all, and now lost all—and who remained not a whit the better for his rashness, his error, and his ruin—what was to become of her?

During the night, 'they' had confined and closely guarded him in the proctor's house. Terence Delany was his fellow-prisoner, and the man's dogged aspect would have repelled all converse, even did not the presence of a sentinel effectually prevent it. At the first break of morning they were tied, each behind a dragoon; and the party, fourteen in number, exclusive of the serjeant in command, set out for Kilkenny gaol.

They had travelled about half of their journey, and just left behind a slip of mountain road, on each side of which hills clothed with heath and fur, and rocks bleached white by time and the weather, were the only scenery, and were now approaching a trifling hamlet, to which the more fertile land gently sloped, when a wild cry came on their ears, and presently a funeral procession, formed by a great concourse of country people of both sexes appeared in view. As the mournful crowd drew near, the serjeant halted his men in the centre of the

road, closed his files, got the prisoners in the midst, and, only recommending all forbearance of insult, thus remained to let it pass.

"D—n my eyes, Jack," said one of the men to his comrade; "but them 'ere women howls confoundedly after the dead fellor."

"Curse, me, aye," replied his comrade, "'tis a noise might scare Neddy, here, from his corn."

"Oye, that 'twould," observed another, a Yorkshire giant, leaning forward on the pummel of his saddle to join in the conversation in front; "'tis the Hoirish cry, as 'em calls it, what such loike woild Hoirish always howls, dom 'em."

"Demme, though," cried a cockney, "if them 'ere vimen, what are arter the coffin, ben't on a lark, like, east-why, they don't come down a tear, for all they clap hands, and hollar, the velps, their d—d gibberish, what none understands but themselves."

"Whey, noa, mon," rejoined the third speaker, "'em doant care a curse for dead choap, for all their outlondish bawling; and——"

"Chise! Chise!"* roared out a number of stentorian voices, that made their horses bound

* Down! down!

under their riders; the coffin was dashed down; the crowd closed and sprung on the dragoons as they passed by, and, in the twinkling of an eye, every soldier was unsaddled and disarmed, and the prisoners, with grand and deafening acclaim, set at liberty. The matter had been altogether so unexpected, and so electric, that no precautions could have been taken; and the military were not yet recovered from their surprise, when the man who had given the first signal-word, with a face of laughing raillery, addressed them.

"Arrah, then, may be that wasn't as nate a thrick, an' as nately done, as ever you seen in your lifes, afore? Myself 'ud a'most sware you'll be for killin' all the corpses you meet on your road, from this day; an' faith you may as well biggin now," pointing to the coffin that lay on the ground, of which the lid had fallen off, and allowed a parcel of large stones to trundle about; "bud, my darlin' red coats, as our work is done, we wants no more; no hurt or harm is intended to a sowl among ye: though, to be sure, 'twould be no great bones to do id, wid your own purty firelocks, too," glancing at the polished barrel of the carbine he held in his hands; "bud, up on your horses, an' go your ways;

you know you can say you just dropt your prisoners on the road—an' so you did faith, like a hot phato, when you couldn't hould 'em—an' don't know what the duoul come o' them, an' that 'ill be no lie for you."

"Brave fellows," cried the serjeant, "for brave you are to attempt and succeed in an action, such as you truly say we have never seen equalled, and generous fellows, too, to give us life and liberty, when we least expected either —brave and generous men, listen to me. You say no harm is intended us; but to send us to our quarters without our swords or carbines would be the heaviest injury you could inflict; we should all be tried and punished for cowardice; I should be turned into the ranks; these poor fellows tied up to the triangle, and half lashed to death; in short, you ruin us, if you keep our arms. I propose a treaty. Discharge our carbines with your own hands, and then let us have them back, when we cannot further use them to your annoyance; and, as for the swords, we shall each of us swear on his own, as you restore them, instantly to put them in our sheaths, and ride off without drawing them: by the faith and honor of soldiers, and of men we shall!"

"It 'ud be too bad on the poor cratures not to listen to 'em," said the leader to his companions.

"Faith, an' it would," said another.

"An' they so mooch in arnest, an' promisin' so well," said two or three more.

"We are not your enemies," resumed the serjeant, seeing them waver, "but English soldiers, come into your country as brothers, and only doing, as soldiers, a disagreeable duty; besides, you have bound us to you in gratitude for ever, and treachery, even if it was in our power, would be impossible."

"Arrah, we'll gi' them the arms," now burst from the whole crowd.

"Stop," said Pierce, advancing: "it is my duty, as this rescue has been undertaken for my advantage, to see that no evil grows out of it to my unknown friends; so, let the carbines be first discharged;" his commands were obeyed; "and now, serjeant, you will prove your sincerity by handing us your cartridge-pouches;" the serjeant readily complied; Pierce emptied them, separately, and returned them, together with the carbines and swords, which latter were, according to treaty, at once sheathed, while the dragoons remained still dismounted. The mi-

litary party, with many professions of thanks, then gained their saddles, superfluously assisted by their new friends, who zealously opened to give free passage; and their miserable throats were also opened for a parting shout, when the serjeant, wheeling his troop round, gave the word, "Soldiers, fire!"—The pistols hidden in the holsters had been, by one party, forgotten, and were instantly discharged; every ball took effect, and fifteen men fell.

"Follow me, now lads!"—the serjeant continued, dashing spurs into his horse, and plunging forward amid the throng, his horse's head pointed towards his quarters: three file closely followed him, and he and they cut through the dense crowd, who had not yet recovered breath or action from this sudden change of affairs: but on the remainder of the troop they closed in an instant after, with frantic cries and gestures of desperation and revenge.

The dragoons, thus surrounded, at first spurred and spurred to free themselves; but the outward circles of the country people pressed on those within, so that the horses stood wedged and powerless. A second volley from the holster-pistols then immediately followed, with effect as deadly as the former, and louder and

louder, and fiercer and fiercer, grew the shouts and efforts for vengeance. The wretched people were unprovided with any weapons except sticks, but they were furious as bulls, and active and ferocious as tigers; some grappled the reins of the horses, and others dragged the riders to the ground; though cut and hacked with the sabres that were still available, and trodden and trampled under the prancing feet of the affrighted animals, or themselves treading and trampling on the bodies of their dead companions, they did not flinch a jot; while their antagonists, unable to act in a party, every moment found their single bravery useless, or overpowered by repeated and ceaseless onsets. One man among the peasantry bounced up behind a dragoon, clasped him in his arms, and both tumbled to the earth; in an instant he was on his legs again, jumped on the breast of his prostrate enemy, wrenched the sword from his grasp, forced it through his temples, and, emitting a shrill cry that was heard above all the other clamour, then waved it aloft, and with the rifled weapon proceeded to inflict deep and indiscriminate wounds on men and horses, until one well-aimed thrust brought him down, and he was crushed beneath the hoofs of the

chargers. A goaded horse, unable to plunge forward, reared up and fell on his haunches, and the ill-fated rider was instantly deprived of life by the crowd that, bounding into the air, leaped and danced upon him. He who at the first commencement of the affair had acted as leader, laid hold of one of the poles of the mock bier, and with it much annoyed the soldiers; a sabre reached him in the abdomen; he snatched a handkerchief from a woman's neck, bound it round the ghastly wound, and, darting forward on his assaulter, grappled with him till the dragoon was lifeless, and, the handkerchief giving way, his own intestines burst from his body, with the exertion. While all this went on, frantic women lined the fences at either side of the road, and with terrible outcries of fear and encouragement, prayers for their friends and curses for their enemies, clapping of hands and tearing of their hair, added to the already deafening yell of the combatants; to their shouts of savage onset, or savage triumph, and the groans or shrieking of the wounded.

This bloody scene was enacted in little more than a minute. In fact, the serjeant and the three men who had at first broken through the

crowd with him, after discovering that they were galloping along on their road homeward, scarcely had time to face about again to the relief of their eleven comrades, and to re-approach the outward lines of the infuriated crowd, when those eleven were reduced to one. From their elevation above the heads of the assailants they were then able to form a pretty correct opinion of how matters stood. They had not yet discharged their second pistols, but, after a moment's pause of indignation, did so, and, as before, every shot told. The wildest cry that had yet been heard arose, a number of voices exclaiming, together, as the dragoons followed up their volley with a furious charge—"Make way, boys, and let them in!"—The crowd accordingly divided. This was what the serjeant had wished and tempted; he fell back with his little party, and cried out,

"Fly, comrades! retreat, retreat!"

The single survivor rushed pale and bloody through the human gap, escaping many missiles aimed at him by the baffled people, and—

"Away, serjeant, away!" he shouted, striking for one push at life, the sides of his snorting steed.

"Where are the rest?" asked the serjeant,—"why do they lag behind?"

"They can't help it," answered the rescued, and, till that moment, despairing man, spurring past them,—"nor we either—on, on!"

"Is it so?" resumed the serjeant; "let us ride, then!"—and all instantly gallopped off at their horses' utmost speed, a mingled roar of disappointment, rage, and triumph, following them for the short time they remained in view.

It would be setting up a claim for more of mildness than generally belongs to humanity, or perhaps expose him to the charge of pusillanimity in the opinion of some of our readers, were we to represent Pierce Shea as an inactive spectator of this affair: and our regard for facts is too strong not to acknowledge, that with the dragoon's sword, on which he now leaned, panting for breath, he had evinced, during the desperate struggle, a revengeful sense of, to his apprehension, the cruel treachery practised on his too credulous friends. The yet uncalmed passions of those around him were for some time indulged in undiminished uproar and confusion of sounds; some loudly rehearsed their exploits, or exultingly exhibited their wounds, or, brandishing the arms of their foes,

told of what they would have done; the shouts of victory, or the boisterous congratulations of triumph, were sent forth; or the ferocity of unsatiated vengeance was exhibited by a few, who, with mad curses and imprecations, ran to trample or hack anew the slaughtered dragoons and horses. But dearly were that day's vengeance and triumph bought; upwards of thirty peasants lay dead on the mountain road, and near a dozen more were wounded. And then was heard the scream of women as they rushed from body to body, recognizing a husband or brother among the slain or dying; or, what rings more awfully and terrifically on the ear, the rough commanding voice of men, changed to weakness and lamentation, as they, too, knelt in sorrow over the corse of a father, a brother, or a son.

The scene that now surrounded him, together with all his late adventures, might well seem to Pierce, as he stood gazing around him, exhausted and scarce able to exert his judgment or recollections, but the confusion of a terrific dream; and his thoughts were yet uncollected, when a body that had hitherto lain as if lifeless, stirred at his feet, and a faint voice, not unfamiliar to his ear, pronounced his name. Shocked

and thrown off his guard, he started aside, and then fixed his staring eyes on Terence Delany. There was a long and deep cut across the wretch's temple, and the blood flowed in a now thickened stream over his cheek, neck, and bosom. Pierce knelt, and endeavoured to raise him, but the gasping voice, that came at intervals, requested his forbearance; he spoke, as usual, in Irish. "No, son of the Sheas, disturb me not, if you wish to leave my dying moments free for what I have to say; I am almost dead; promise to fulfil my last prayer."

"I do promise before God."

"Here, then, untie this"—pointing with his feeble finger to his bloody shirt, where Shea found a few shillings carefully secured by a thread—"you must take that to my mother, and now the only mother of my children—I begged it for them since we parted; you will find them all, not far from this, in a ruined barn, near to the blackened walls of Murtoch Maher's house; lead her to my corpse; and tell her I died wishing for her blessing; and blessing, though they are not here with me, her son's children—and—" his voice grew for a moment stronger, his glassy eye lit up, and he was able to raise his clenched hand and braced arm

as he added,—"tell her, too, I died with the traitors' blood upon me—" he sunk down, and Pierce thought he was dead; but soon after he again opened his eyes, and without motion resumed:

"I am going to meet you, *Ailleen*, wife of my heart; yes, the pulse of my heart you were, when it was young and joyful; and, when it grew black and sorrowful, still you were its darling; you might have been rich, but you were poor with Terence—oh! tell my mother, young man, to be kind to poor Ailleen's children;"—a rapid convulsion passed over his face, his limbs unconsciously quivered, and the black blood gushed fresher from his death-wound, in consequence of a violent effort he made to grasp Pierce's arm, as, with unwinking eyes rivetted on him, he just had time to say—

"You saved me from the crime of murder—I owe it to you that, now as I go to face my Maker, I have not that red sin on my soul—and I would requite you.—First, I pray that your young days may be full of joy, that your beloved may be like my Ailleen, and that your children, and your children's children, may rise up to be a comfort to you—and—and—" the last words were scarcely audible or intelligible—

"listen, and do not move me—listen with your soul—an enemy is close upon you—put no trust——" he stretched out his gaunt limbs, and died.

The tears streamed down Pierce's cheeks; general carnage does not start a tear, when a particular misery, like this, will unlock the sluices of human feeling. With the assistance of two women he bore the body to the village, where, in a spacious barn, the corses of those whose homes were not near were "laid out" in ghastly array, but with all reverence and decency: and, as Pierce Shea was most anxious to be at his father's house, he lost no time in first fulfilling the sad request of the dying man, and therefore quickly turned his feet towards the place where, by poor Terence's description, he might expect to find his helpless survivors. It may not be out of course here to remark, that if the language uttered by Terence Delany appear too refined for one in his situation of life, it is ascertainable as only in strict unison with the genius and idiom of the language in which he spoke, and from which we have literally translated; in the Irish, there is nothing of what is known by the name of vulgarism; its construction even in the mouths of the pea-

santry, who to this day use it, has been and can be but little corrupted; nor could the familiar colloquy of the meanest among them be rendered, in English, into common-place or slang.

Inquiring his way to Murtock Maher's barn, Pierce found the place was on his nearest way homeward. A destructive fire had, some time previously, consumed the dwelling of a wealthy farmer; from a contiguous barn part of the thatch roof had, to prevent the spreading of the flame, been torn; one end was yet covered, but through the other end rain and storm found free admission;—and this was the comfortless dwelling of Moya Delany and her three grandchildren.

Pierce soon came on the desolate group. The old woman, of unusual height, and bearing in her mien and features a strong likeness to her deceased son, stood erect, with her back to the entrance, as he approached, the youngest child asleep in her withered bosom, and the other two hungrily watching a few potatoes, that were roasting in the white ashes of a fire made on the floor with green furze. Till the moment of his entering, Shea had not sufficiently reflected on the difficulties of his mission, and now felt painfully at a loss how to convey the dismal tidings

he bore. The old woman had not perceived his entrance, and he stood behind her for some moments, ere his "Dieu-a-uth" startled her as if from a trance. Turning quickly round, she then stared at him in silence, neither uttering another word. At last she spoke in a firm, though mournful voice, and the following dialogue ensued in Irish :

"My heart is sorry, young gentleman, that I cannot offer you a seat in this poor place."

"There is no necessity, good woman:" and his throat choked up, as he looked around;—"I have only a message from your son."

She advanced, and fixed her eyes upon him.

"My son?—and what tidings from my son? —I did not see him last night, but my dreams were with Terence;—your face frightens me, young man; tell your errand."

"My face ought to shew the sorrow of my heart," said Pierce, in a broken accent, handing the little legacy.

"God of glory!—I dreamt I sat by his corse —and this moment I was looking at his coffin in the fire;"—she caught his arm, and gazed more wildly and keenly into his eyes;—"my son is dead!—aye, and here is blood upon you, and you are his murderer."

"A merciful heaven forbid!"—

"But he is gone from the old mother, and the little orphans?"—This was asked in a tone of the deepest misery, whilst her own tears now came fast.

"Christ have pity on you!" was Pierce Shea's only answer, while he covered his face with his hands.

She was stupified, but did not fall. Then she wept plentifully, but without loud lament. She sat and called the children around her, and told them they had no father, now; at the same time pressing, with one arm, until it screamed, the infant that lay on her breast, and with the other encircling the two elder ones, whose piercing cries arose, as they clung to her tattered but clean vesture. After some time she desired Pierce to relate the manner of her son's death; and as he went on, rage, revenge, and, when he had uttered the last part of Terence's dying message, triumph flushed her face, and dried the tears on her cheeks; and the widowed and childless old woman asked, in a stern voice—

"He died with the blood of the traitors upon him?"

"He did—I saw it wet upon his hands."

"Then he died as I would have him die," she resumed, rising up, "and no tear shall ever more drop from his mother's eye, to wet the early grave of Terence Delany:"—Pierce saw her, with astonishment, catch up a wooden vessel full of water, and extinguish the embers of the fire; and then she took the second-eldest child by the hand, motioned the other to the entrance, and, with the youngest still held on one arm, added, in a tone, more of command than of entreaty, "Lead me to my son's corpse; it must be stretched, and watched, and buried, and those he has left behind him must sit at its head."

Thus admonished, and under such afflicting circumstances, Pierce, notwithstanding his own anxiety to get home, could not hesitate to comply; so, taking the infant from the old woman's arms, he led the way; she, with a firm step and the two other grandchildren held each by the hand, silently following.

It was known that Terence Delany had no home; and when they arrived at the barn in which, as we before noticed, his body was "laid out," they found that all the usual attentions had been bestowed upon it. The mother walked straight up to his bier, only casting a few rapid

glances, at each side, on the other corpses that lined her way; she stood erect for a moment over the silent features of her only son; then slowly stooped, and kissed his lips; and at last, bursting into an irregular and dismal song, uttered, in many an unequal dhass, or verse, his keenthecaun.

"I nursed you at my breast; I baked your marriage cake; I sit at your head—Ullah!

"I gave you my milk; I fed you with my heart's blood; I look upon yours.

"I rocked your cradle; I nursed your children; I must follow in your funeral.

"Your children are about me; I see my child's children! but I see not my child.

"I remember your face in youth; its brightness was manly like the sun's; it made daylight round about me.

"I remember your form in the dance; and strong was your arm when you wrestled with the young men; none was like my son to me.

"And none was like him to his own Ailleen, the wife of his bosom: Ailleen, with the blue eyes, and the yellow hair; her children look at me with her eyes.

"Many strove for Ailleen: but she left her

father's riches to share your cabin; she chose you above all: she was your bride.

"Ailleen was beautiful and good; you loved one another; and my heart laughed to see you in your own house; the old mother's heart, sitting by your fire.

"And all your days were pleasant till the destroyer came; then your young cheeks grew pale, and the light left your eyes, and I laughed no more.

"Ruin blackened your youth, and made your hearts old too soon, and ended your days: Ailleen died first; you see her now where she is; tell Ailleen your mother loves her.

"I am left alone; and the little children of Ailleen have no father.

"But I weep not for you now; you fell revenging yourself on our enemies; the blood of the traitors shall alone nourish the green grass on your grave.

"I nursed you at my breast; I baked your marriage cake; I sit at your head!—Ullah!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE blast fumed and blustered through the bare fence, and through the leafless orchard, and the pelting hailstones drove adown the gaping-wide-open and perfectly straight chimney of old Ned Shea's kitchen, and fizzed in the roaring turf fire before which our friend, Andy Houlohan, and a new acquaintance, whom we beg to introduce by the dangerous name of Bridge Chree, or Bridget *Heart*, were seated, enjoying their tête-à-tête in the sense for which that term was at first invented; for Andy and Bridge were, as a lapidary would say, lovers of the first water, or, in their own idiom, and pretty much in the same words, "jewels at the business."

"Love rules the court, the camp, the grove, &c.,"

in humble prose, is a most unconscionable tyrant; his ambition expanded as the earth; and from the monarch of many nations to the lowly proprietor, nay, to the drudge of the lowliest cot, making all bow before his empire. He

fetters the free, and upon the slave casts additional bondage; he humanizes the savage, subdues the bravo, and, haply, makes the coward valiant. Now is he presiding deity of the gorgeous palace, where delicious music and balmy perfumes mingle in the flattered air; where costly viands and sparkling wines eke out the banquet; where downy couches tempt his languid limbs to dalliance or repose; and where beauty, made awful by rank and dazzling attire, lavishes upon him her ambrosial sighs and goddess-smiles to tempt his eternal sojourn; yet anon we trace him to the smoky kitchen, clothed in a suit of clumzy frieze, peeling the humble potato with divine little thumb-nail; and his witching little mouth surrounded by a white circle, that has remained on it since his last hearty draught of acid buttermilk: with the cricket's chirp, or the kitten's pur, his only music; with a rush for a chandeleir, or galaxy of argands; with a three legged stool for his only lounger, and the unpretending Bridge Chree for his inspiration.

We could follow the mischief-doing urchin into many a stranger scene; we could unmask his various disguises, and the endless arts to which he has recourse to spread his universal

sway; but having brought him to our present sphere (in which, for our lawful purposes, we have ourselves seen him, and here pledge our veracity to the fact, but would not that our fair and gentle readers should quarrel with him for his mean versatility; and we think we may add, in an "aside," of this there is no danger;) having shown, we say, that, in his thirst for universal dominion, he deigns to visit such humble folk as are of our acquaintance, we shall follow his vagaries no farther, lest, as the imp is spiteful, he might turn on us in revenge for our exposé, and incapacitate us for our task of grave historians.

No matter how homely their place of welcome, the wide world did not supply him with a heartier one than did Andy and Bridge. It could not be said that the perishable thing called beauty had, on either side, been accessory to their mutual attachment; they had no fear that they should cease to love as soon as they should grow ugly; but, as their passion was derived from what could not change or decay, it was more likely to be constant and durable, and well fitted for the "wear and tear" of life."

Among his compeers, Andy went by the title or surname of "Andy Awling," or airy Andrew,

a term significant of a certain irresistible heedlessness of action and manner, thought and speech, by which he was distinguished, and applicable, indeed, as well to his outward as to his inward man. Never did matter mould itself to mind more agreeably than in the form and face of Andy. Tall, square, slight, loose, and bony, he seemed to have been put together carelessly, or by chance; looking like a bold yet imperfect sketch of a big fellow; and his swarthy visage, entirely devoid of flesh, with the skin fitting tight to his high cheek-bones, and with its mixed expression of good-humour, foolishness, fidget, and subtlety, was in keeping with this figure. Even his clothes hung around him at odds and ends, as if they had been tossed on with a pitchfork; and his hat, that part of every man's costume, in its shape and adjustment most redolent of character, was sometimes pushed back to the very last holding-point of his skull, sometimes dragged down into his eyes, and sometimes only half covering his head, just as the head happened to be humourously, gravely, or rakishly inclined: winter and summer he wore, in common with almost every man around him, a mighty outside blue coat, that fell from his shoulders, pinioned his arms, and trailed in

the puddle or dust; the kness of his inexpressibles always swung wide open, as did his shirt-collar, and, all but one or two buttons, his vest, so that the vision of a black hairy chest was seen in all weathers; and his stockings, festooning down to his brogues, generally left his legs half naked.

But then we have seen that he was the most loving and faithful creature under the sun; to all (except when fighting at fairs or patterns) good-natured; and, above all, possessed of a quality in high esteem with the weaker sex, of every degree, that is, utter fearlessness of danger or death in mortal combat. It was Andy's courage and prowess, in fact, that first recommended him to Bridge Chree: and, in the manner following, we love to rehearse the story.

Paudge Dermody, whose name the reader will recollect, was a little of the rustic petit-maitre, making advances, through sheer vanity, to every girl he met, and, to own the truth, and giving due honour to his mastership in the art of love, many were Paudge's conquests; but he boasted of the favours he received, nay, equally vain of his wit, often amused his companions as well by his own folly as at the expense of those he set a sighing. Among the rest, Bridge Chree was distinguished by his flattering atten-

tions ; and one evening, while sitting with some friends over a cup of ale, Paudge heard the name mentioned, as the most recent of his conquests; but he seemed only half willing to admit the honour of having vanquished poor Bridge ; swore a raking oath that she was an ugly jade, by far too humble for his notice ; and "she had crooked legs, made after the ould Munsther fashion, wid the wrong ends down," he said, "an' she squinted worse nor a dog lookin' at the edge of a rapin'-hook."

"Why then may this dhrink be my pison," observed Andy Awling, who did not relish the slight cast on a fellow-servant of his own, living in the same house with him, "bud Bridge Chree has two as good eyes as ever looked sthraight afore 'em ;" (although he said this, he knew in his heart there was more gallantry than truth in the assertion), "an' as for the bits o' legs, I'll be bould to say I can spake about 'em, the same, afther a manner, as if they were my own, case why, walkin' about undher the one roof wid 'em, I seen 'em farther up, an' oftener nor yourself, Paudge Dermody;" we again interrupt our knight, and we do so for the sake of the fair one whose cause he may be supposed to advocate rather injudiciously, for in truth she was a modest

creature enough, and we can aver, whatever innocent bungling Andy is here guilty of, that he never had a glimpse much beyond the ankles; "an' I'd swear down upon the spot, this present moment, they're as even, all the way, up an' down, as the blessed kippin in my hand." The comparison held, whatever was his authority, for the stick alluded to might well represent the identical legs in question; "so my nate bouchal, you must just say your words backwards, as your master (you know who I mane) says his prayers, or by the sowl o' my father, God rest him, you'll sup sorrow afore you leave the place."

But Paudge Dermody was a fellow of too much mettle to be thus forced into an acknowledgment of excellence that all the world knew did not exist; he therefore demurred to Andy's dictation, who not only at once proceeded to put into execution his threat against the real offender, but, while his hand was in, he fairly drubbed out of the room two others who were in company, and who had said no word against the fair cause of quarrel, nor in any other way provoked such treatment; so, by the success of her champion, and the laws of chivalry, Bridge Chree's eyes squinted not, neither were her

legs crooked, nor did they taper in any unusual manner.

Fame, who delights in publishing deeds of valour, soon conveyed to the ears of the vindicated damsel the tidings of this battle, and her smiles, and her fuss about many little matters that appertained to Andy's household comforts, together with whispers in his ear when all were assembled round the kitchen fire, after work, fully evinced her gratitude.

"She was mooch behouldin' to him, for standin' up for a poor girl that had no one else to take her part, God help her:" and Andy answered,

"Don't spake iv id, ma colleen-beg, the sprissaun wasn't able to rightify his words, an' I'd do the same by the Theage, there," meaning a mastiff that slept by the fire, "or any creature under Ned Shea's roof, not to talk of you."

This reply, though it rather seemed to take away any personal compliment from his services, did not lessen the poor girl's gratitude; and she forthwith commenced a series of attentions and kindnesses, that gradually won on Andy's vanity, drew his regard, his thanks, and at last his love. Bridge had a draught for him, of a morning, when he met her after milking the

cows; she was never without the means of "a treat," at fair or pattern; she bought him a pair of red garters, as a keepsake, and tied them on with her own hands; and Andy wore them for the better part of one day, but we take shame to ourselves on his account to acknowledge that on the next day they were thrown by, as too cumbrous about his knees, and calculated to give cold by keeping the stockings tied up, "in a way he wasn't used to." On the road to a dance—(Andy was "the divil at dancing," and so, in truth, was Bridge Chree, that is, they wrought laboriously at it, and could hold out a day and night), he, in consequence of all this, boldly told his love, and flourishing over her head the very stick to which she was so much indebted, and which shared a portion of the esteem she bore its owner, used to say, "he was taken' wid her more nor wid the varsal world besides, always barrin' Pierce Shea, an' the mother that bore him; an' ready an' willin' he was to slash half the parish for any of their sakes; to which tender declaration, she as usually answered, "there was no love lost;" and thus did matters stand on the night of which we at present find it necessary to speak.

But in spite of the trial combat, the criticism

of Paudge Dermody on Bridget Heart was not altogether malicious. She was Andy's negative, and perhaps this might be one cause of his subjugation, if mankind, as it is asserted, always undervalue what they have, and sigh for what they have not; he was tall, she was short in the extreme; he was lean, she was stout—fat; his face was dun and skinny, hers was rosy, round, and full; his two eyes stared for ever on before him: the pupil of her left one rested plump against the wall of her nose (but it is doubtful if, in love affairs, this be not an advantage, as the proprietor of such an eye can give a more lengthened ogle from one corner to the other, whereas a person having the pupil exactly in the middle of the ball must perform the same evolution by two distinct movements, for which reason the effect is seen to be less powerful; and besides the former individual can, if of the bashful sex, look, amid a room full of people, full at her lover, while all present shall think her regards are fixed on the wall, or on the lady at the far corner of the table); she waddled in her gait, her legs being indeed bowed; but then she had red, rich lips, a little large, and ever smiling; teeth, regular as those of a comb, and white as ivory; and her eyes, even

that to which so much allusion has been made, were black and sparkling. Thus outwardly constructed, Andy and his mistress were inwardly similar, both being simple, gay, and affectionate.

They sat, as some pages back we have said, before the blazing fire, which it had been Bridge Chree's care to heap up, after all the other members of her master's family had retired to bed. How close they sat, we are not bound to declare; and, indeed, when as veracious compilers of our history we are admitted as witnesses where others would be unwelcome, we dislike to reveal all we see and hear; some prefatory placing, and disposing, and employing of their persons, must therefore be passed over; as also much of their conversation, until we arrive at that part of it which it is necessary the reader should know; and, in this case, it is plain he must be content with what we choose, or, after due reflection, deem advisable to give him; seeing we might keep it all to ourselves, were we so inclined, or did it suit our purposes.

"Musha, hould up your own likely face, now, a hudgeen-ma-chree," said Andy, Bridge having

dropped it on her breast, at something in the previous course of the conversation.

"Andy, Andy, wasn't id a cryin' shame fur you to make sich a vow as that?"

"Ma colleen-beg, mysef 'ud have no comfort in the married state, when I'd see our poor Pierce sorrowin' fur the want iv a wife."

"An' so you went to make a vow afore God, that you'd never do id, for yousef, till his weddin' night?"

"Aye, à-roon; becase I was so knocked iv a lump, at all his moanin' an' sorrowin' that I'd amost sware, if he went an' got a suggan, and put id round his neck, the Lord keep us frum temptation, I'd just do the same thing along wid him."

"An' here was I, getherin' for id, an' scrapin' fur id, this penny and that penny, and puttin' odds and ends together, all to no good."

"Och, then, my darlin' is id cryin' you are? Don't now, a-cuishla, don't."

"Oh, Andy, an' afther you cum round me, in the way you did, an' made me so sure iv id."

"Well, Bridge, honey ——."

"It's thrue enough what the poor misthress says; the boys, God mend 'em, says she is all rogues: Anasthause an' myself used to

think she'd be only sayin' id to keep us to the work, but it's now, I'm sartin iv id, to my sorrow."

"Hearken to me, a hudg."

"An' what 'ill Peggy Bawn say now, becase she begrudged me sich a clane boy; he made a vow, my dear, never to marry 'till Pierce Shea 'ud be doin' id along wid him; an' Pierce Shea 'ill never lay his eyes on Alley Doolin, while the world is a world, nor never take up wid another afther her, that's sarten; and so, by coorse, Andy Awling 'ill never marry Bridge Chree—Och, God forgi' you, Andy, praise be to his name fur all things, it's a grate thrial you brought on me."

To gain a certain point with his mistress, Andy had acquainted her with the vow in question, but seeing her take it to heart more grievously than he expected, or, indeed, could bear, he now resolved to patch up the matter.

"Musha, Bridge, what signifies a small little twelvemonth, afther all?"

"A twelvemonth, Andy?"

"Aye, à-roon; sure we'll both live id out, plaise God; and then may be, some one 'ud shew the misthress how the boys can be loyal as well as the girls; an' make Peggy Bawn's

heart grumble within her, when yoursef an' mysef 'ill take wid one another till death, afther the soggarth lays his loocky hands over us, an' I'll kiss my wife, an' you'll kiss your husband, an' that 'ill be mysef that's here to the fore."

"What is id you mane at all, Andy?"

"Why, a-cuishla, duv you think I'd be the own shuch, to go an' make a vow, if I hadn't a barrin along wid it? No, faith; I'll make a holy vow afore God, says I, an' blessed be your name, sure you well know betther nor I can tell you, that it's as great a penance as I could put on myself, becase Bridge Chree is the darlin' o' my heart, that I'll never marry till my poor Pierce Shea is at the same work wid me; barrin, says I, agin; barrin he lets a twelvemonth go by, becase I can't wait a day longer fur him."

"An' why didn't you tell me that afore, Andy?"

"Musha, I couldn't get in a word, you war breakin' your heart an' my own, cryin' in sich a way; bud dhry up your eyes now, agra" (taking her apron and doing it himself); "there now."

"Fur sarten, Andy, you're a born rogue."

"Don't say that; barrin it's the turn iv a rogue to be foolish-fond o' you ma-colleen beg, I dont know any other roguery that's in me."

"Well, be asy, now, wid yoursef."

"Mostha, I'm sorry enough to make the vow at all, an' faith, only I have no money, I knows how id could all be brought about sooner nor a twelvemonth, any way."

"An might a body be axin' you how, Andy?"

"Och, it's a quare thing you'd ax, that Andy 'ud deny you; but don't be lookin' straight at me, afther that fashion, or them rogues iv eyes 'ill put id all out of my head."

"Oh, you're a bouchal, Andy; well: here I'll look up at the bacon." Bridge, to her own conscience and satisfaction, might have kept her word, but an unprejudiced spectator would have sworn she looked far wide of the bacon. "Aye, that 'ill do betther, fur it's a thing umpossible fur a poor boy to think iv any thing bud the girl that owns him, when two sich burnin black eyes is lookin' at him—see there agin, now."

"You're a coaxin' boy, Andy a-vourneen."

"What was I sayin' at all? but let us feel if your head is on your showlders, a-cuishla."

"Be asy, Andy, I say agin."

"*Slaw the Mellish,*" * said Andy, smacking his lips: "Well, Bridge, as I was goin' to say, it's a thing plain to be seen as the handle on my spade, that all our pursbuin' iv Crohoore-na-bilhoge is of no more use than fur me to thry to put the moon in my pocket; becase all the world knows he has his faction at his back, God bless the hearers, an' no harm meant; and has poor Alley livin' among 'em; this very blessed day, masther Pierce himself tould me as mooch, afther all his bogglin'; an' the only way to cum at her is fur mysef to take a short stick in my hand, an' trudge off to Sheeum-na-Sheeog,† that lives up in the hills, in the very thick o' them; bud there's no more nor one skillen in my pocket, within, an' he'd do little fur the likes o' that; an' sorry in my heart I am it isn't God's will I have the thrifle of money, case why, the longer I stay away from Sheeum-na-Sheeog, the longer will Alley stay where she is, and the longer Pierce stay widout her, an' then, agin, the longer we must stay as we are—may be the whole twelvemonth.

Bridge instantly pulled out a little tin box, whence she drew half a guinea, and slid it into Andy's near hand.

* It is sweet. † Sheeum—William.

"Och, you darlin' o' the world, there's not your match from the place where we sit to where the Connaught men cums frum!—sure, wid this to stick on Sheeum's eye, I'll make him spy out fur us, I'm thinkin'."

"It's a good notion o' your's, Andy, honey; bud, our ould masther, here, does'nt give ear to a word about Crohoore an' the good people."

"Musha, good loock to him, what sort iv a thick head is there on him, at all, then?—If he war wid us, in our good for nothin' chases after Crohoore, he'd think in another way; there was the mornin' we cum upon him near the ould castle, didn't I see him wid my two livin' eyes, get sthraddle-legs on his short goon, an' fly over the sthrame, betther nor an ould hare 'ud do id? sure you're in the knowledge, yoursef, Bridge, that masther Pierce is as good at a lep, as any boy in the counthry round, an' he wasn't able to go half-way; an' there's not that christhen born 'ud do id, barrin he had other's help; an' whin we thought to shoot him as dead as dour-nail, war'n't our own goons bewitched, so that the sorrow a spark 'ud lave 'em; whin we went afther him to the cave, wasn't Pierce a dead boy, only fur myself; an' the rid divil Paddy Loughnan, frightened to

the back-bone, whatever happened the both in the cave, within; an' whin he came out among us, all iv a sudd'n, didn't I fire sthraight into his face, an' do him no more hurt nor if I struck him wid a thrawneen?* an' I was nigh hand payin' well fur id; tumbled about, like a pusheen-cat, on the broad o' my back, wid the fairy-blow; an' God must have a likin' to me, or I was a gone crature."

"All thrue enough, Andy; an' if the ould masther war afther discoorsin' wid Biddy Grasse, that lives at Knockbulligeen, she'd let him see whether there war good people in the world, or no."

"What happened her, Bridge?"

"I'm afeard the story 'ud be a long one."

"Och, no, à-roon; the night's young; an' betther for us be here at this good fire, sayin' to the wind that's widout, blow your best, abouchal, nor be perishin' alone by oursefs in our could beds."

"Well; hould your hands, now, Andy, an' I'll tell you about Biddy Grasse."

"I will, a-cuishla; I'll be a good boy:" they drew their stools—or stool—we disdain to say which—closer to the blaze, and prepared, one

* Fairy-weed.

to speak, and the other to listen, with that peculiar pleasure story-telling imparts.

"Now, Andy, this is as thrue a story as ever you hard; I had id frum Biddy's own gossip, an' she had id from Biddy's own mouth. Biddy Grasse had as fine a boy born to her as God ever sent, an' she was doatin' fond iv id, to be sure, becase all the rest o' the childer were girls—"

"An' good loock to 'em, fur girls, every day they get up; what 'ud the poor boys do, only God was good enough to send 'em to us?"

"None o' your thievin' ways, Andy, an' let me go on."

"Well, yes.; I'll hould my whisht, agra."

"The child thruv' well, an' was a pleasure to look at, 'till amost a twelvemonth ould, or thereaway; when all at once, Biddy obsarved it to pine an' pine away, till it war no bigger nor my fist; an' it used to laugh out in the most sthrange way, an' grin, an' look about id, as cunnin' as a mouse; an' then bawl and squall, in a minute, agin, in a manner no ways like a christhen child; an' whin she'd put id to the breast, 'twould amost tear her to pieces, an' then make sich faces up to her; so that the poor crature iv a woman was frightened to look at id. Well;

she thought to wane id, but it wouldn't ate a bit fur her, an' was ever an always wheenin' an' wheenin' from mornin' to night, an' she thought it war goin' to die, sorry in her heart at the same: bud, to the wonder o' the world, it lived on, three months, widout any food that she knew iv, not growing bigger nor less, only just the same way, an' many a weary night she had a-watchin' id.

"One night she went to her bed, but didn't fall a-sleepin', her mind was so crossed, thinkin' iv her puny child, an' left a rush, lightin'; an', behould you, Andy, a little while afther, lyin' still an' quite, only her eyes half-open, she sees id sit up straight in the cradle, an' turn about its wizzened face, an' peep here an' there, to see if every body was sleepin'; and then it gets out on the flure, an' goes over to the hob, where there was a lapreen* iv oaten bread for the next mornin'; an' it's as thrue as the fire is burnin' afore us, down it squatted on its hunkers, an' munged an' munged, 'till the whole was gone, all the while lookin' about id, like a cat that 'ud be thievin': an' then it creeped back agin to the cradle, an' took up its fairy bagpipes, an' played a fairy-tune."

* Half a cake of bread.

"Christ save us an' keep us! but that was frightful, sure enough;" said Andy, who sat as pale as death.

"An' sarten you may be, Andy, that poor Biddy was sore afeard, herself; an' now she bethought in her mind, many's the piece of bread she missed for a good while back; an' many's the time whin her man, an' hersef, an' the girls 'ud be out, she cum alone to the dour, an' hard the wild music within, bud couldn't tell how, well knowin' she left only the child at home. She didn't tell the man o' the house a word iv all this; he was a conthrary, cross-grained, dark man, an' she thought wid herself he might kill her an' the child: but she went her ways to an ould knowledgable woman, that they called Noseen Branan, in regard o' the nose was on her, bein' no nose at all, fur it fell off in the frost, or a thing that-a-way, an', wid the tears in her eyes, she tould her story; an', sure enough, Noseen guessed how id was, at the first goin'-off; as you're alive, standin' there, Biddy, says she, that's no more your child nor I am; och, God be good to me, Noseen, says Biddy, what else is id; some old man belonging to the good people, says Noseen, agin; they tuck him away whin he was a child, an' had him among 'em ever

sence, married to some o' their women, but now he's too ould to be among em' any longer, an' so they left him in the place o' your fine boy. Och-hone-a-rie, what's to become o' me? says Biddy. Are you a bould woman, fur you must do a bould action, Noseen axed iv Biddy Grasse. I'd do any thing to get back my boy, Biddy made answer. Why, then, you must watch your time, wid a brave heart, an' lay hands on the ould man, an' put him into a bag, an' take him wid you to the river side, and throw him in; but don't let the heart fail you, or you're a gone woman; an' be sure you lave him plenty iv oaten bread, an' don't mind his ways, but call him all the coaxin' names you'd call your own child, 'till it's done.

"Well, Andy:—"

"Did she lay fingers on him?" interrupted Andy.

"Wait 'till you hear; home she came, an' went to the cradle, an' the child, as id seemed to be, was in id, as if fast asleep; bud the moment she bent over him, he opened his eyes an' grinned up at her, as mooch as to say, she thought, I knows all how an' about id, an' she hid her face, an' ran to the other side o' the cabin, an' sat down to bring her wits about her.

One time she grew afeard to throw him amid the river, thinkin' Noseen might be wrong, an' may be she'd take the life iv her own born child; but then she bethought her iv all she seen, an' raisoned wid hersef that sure no right child could do the like: an' she went arguin' and pondherin' what coorse to take, an' at last got courage; so, whin she found him sleepin' in arnest, Biddy slipt him into a nail-bag, tyin' the sthring fast on him; but while she was tyin' id, he squeeled, an' bawled, an' kicked so hard, that the poor sowl let him dhrop frum her hands, an' hadn't spirit to lift him up agin fur a long while; an' he worked away 'till he got a bit iv his nose out, an' she hard him givin' a wild curse,—the sheeog, that if he war a christhen infant could'nt spake a word for months to come; so this made her sure, an', while he was sthrugglin' an' kickin' in the bag on the flure, down she stooped—"

"Murther!" cried Andy, knitting his brows, while his teeth chattered, and the cold perspiration broke out on his forehead—"oh, by the sowl o' man, I wouldn't put a hand near him fur the king iv England's throne."

"Down she stooped, an' in a minute had him on her back, an' away she ran, screechin' hersef,

to the river, an' there she shook him out o' the bag into the deepest an' maddest part o' the current ; he sunk, an' rose agin, an' as he dhrove down the sthrame, sittin' on it like any thing, Biddy saw he was an' ould little man, sure enough; an' she just hard him cryin' out—oh! ma-hurp-on-duoul! I'm sorry I didn't do for you last night, as I intinded !"—when she run home, an' there was her own fine boy, lost an' gained, in the cradle afore her."

"Well," said Andy, relieving himself by a long-drawn breath, "Biddy Grasse was the thruth iv a bould woman, that's sarten : musha, myself 'ud no more do id nor I'd ate a harrow for my supper, an' the spikes 'ud be mighty apt to hurt a body, I'm tauld ; an' sure, Bridge, as you said afore, if Ned Shea hard that story, he wouldn't be sayin' any thing bad o' the good people, in haste, agin."

"There's nothin' in the world 'ud persuade ould Ned Shea, Andy ; he gives the bothered side to all kinds o' witchcraft : tho' little right he has, in regard his own family suffered well by it."

"What's that you say, Bridge, à-roon?—there was witchcraft in the family?"

"Aye, à-vich; did you never hear tell iv id?"

"Musha, never a word; bud won't be long so, plaise God, havin' you to the fore."

"I'd tell you wid a-heart-an'-a-half, becase I likes well to hear a story, or tell a story, only I'm afeard o' my life it's growin' too late, an' what 'ud become o' me iv the ould misthress war to waken, an' ketch us here."

"An', case she did, what could she make iv id? Did she never coort, a bit, hersef, I wondher?"

"Avoch, Andy, them times is gone wid her, an' now it's nothin' bud 'mind your work,' frum week's-end to week's-end. Well, à-vich, here's the story, any how.

"You know what a wicked set o' people the bocchochs is, given' to all sorts o' witchcraft an' evil doins, the Lord save us; it was upon a time, now fifty years or more; I don't remember id—"

Andy here interrupted Bridge to rally her on the simplicity of soul that urged her to assert her personal ignorance of facts that, according to her own statement, had happened before her mother was born; and we take advantage of the interruption to remark, that, without meaning to say we have led the reader so fur in this chapter for nothing,—a particular degree of at-

tention will be necessary while Bridge Chree proceeds in her second story.

"Thrue enough, Andy, a-cuishla," in reply to his criticism; "but, as I was sayin', iv a time, durin' the patthern o' John's-well, there came people from all parts o' the world, to do pilgrimage at the holy place, an' a power of bocchochs came too, to beg iv the good christhens, as yoursef may see 'em to this day, an' to sell beadses, an' gospels, an' them sort. Well; whin the patthern was over, an' all good people gone away, there was a bocchoch cum a beggin' to Ned Shea's father's door, the same house we're sittin' in at this prasent time; an' by coorse he got shelther, and the best iv every thing in the way; people is afeard, you know, to refuse them any thing, becase they might bewitch all afore 'em, cows an' horses, an' all, man an' baste, the growin' crop, an' the seed in the ground; so he ate an' dhrank, an' had lodgin', like one o' the family; an', I'm tould, was a clane, clever, likely young fellow, Andy, mooch the same iv yourself, frum bein' well to look at, I mane, bud you have none iv his rogue's thricks about you, I hope in God—be asy, now, I tell you;—so he stopt at ould Ned Shea's house, —not the ould Ned Shea that is now, but the

ould fellow iv all, that was his father,—fourteen or fifteen days, or there-a-way; and may be he'd do a start o' work, but very little iv id, only in the night he'd set himself down among 'em, an' rehearse many sthrange an' wonderful stories iv his ramblin' way o' life; an', as far as their fear an' dread iv a bocchoch 'ud let 'em go, every body loved an' liked him—the villain o' the world that gave sich a bad return for all.

"Ould Ned Shea that is now had a sisther, a clever, hansome crature, as I'm tould by them that seen her; much like Pierce in the face, only no ways so big, as you may suppose, an' rich an' well she used to dhress, no farmer's daughther in the place, or the next to it, went finer or braver, because her father could afford to give, an' he gave wid all his heart, to his own an' only girl, that was the light in his eyes; an' tinderly she was brought up; an' many o' the richest an' best born o' the young men o' these parts came a coortin' iv her; but she wasn't asy to be plaised, or else had no notions in that away, goin' about, an' walkin' wid her head up, an' her heart simple; troublin' herself not the laste on any thing but her maid's thoughts. Now, mind me, Andy. What duv you say to this thing iv a bocchoch, bud he moost go an'

make love to her in an underhand way? an' what duv you think id ended in? why, first, if she war shy an' lofty to them that war her aquils, or more, may be, fur sarten she didn't give ear to a rovin' bocchoch; the grand colleen knew what was her place an' part; bud he swore an oath to her, if she'd tell any o' the family, he'd bring sorrow and poverty to their dour, an' she was loth to say a word fur that good raison; an' when he found he could't cum round her by fair manes, he tried foul manes, to be sure.

"You often hard, Andy, that the bocchochs can make bewitched pins, sich as if they gives one o' them to a young crature iv a girl, or an ould one, no matther which, she'll go wid 'um the world over, in misery and in hardships, if she war a king's daughter?"

"Often I hard iv the thing," replied Andy, "but never could come across any one 'ud tell me how the charm was put upon the pin, a-chorra."

"Och then, Andy, I'd tell id, bud it's too fearful to rehearse at this lonely hour o' the night."

"Musha, no, a-cuishla; sure myself 'ill stay as near you as ever I can, while you're tellin' id,

an' divil a once we'll look about, frum the fire fornent us."

"I had id iv a cuseen o' my own, who was taken wid a young girl, that had no likin' fur him, an' he went to an ould bocchoch to get a bewitched pin. Curos he was to see how the charm was made: and the bocchochs, fur a good fee, dhressed him in their tatthered clothes, an' passed him for one o' themselves, an' so he seen the whole wicked work; God forgive him, it war a great sin, an' a heavy penance he got fur id, the next time he went to his Easther duty. He seen two o' their ould withered women go to a lone bog, in the dead o' the night, sayin' words, all the while, that he couldn't understand; they war like prayers, bud not the same a christhen 'ud say; an' they seeked out, crawlin' on hands an' knees, for a little herib, an' they pult id; wid undhressed hemp, wetted in the dew o' the night, they spun a thread, an' then dyed id wid the little herib; he went wid them to a berrin-place, an' they scooped out a grave, an' tuck up a cauld corpse, that was nine days berrid; an' the man died widout a priest in his last moments, an' was a very wicked man, for no other 'ud do; they lifted off the coffin-lid, an' the corpse lay bare in the moonlight."

"The Lord be good to us?" ejaculated Andy."

"Amen, I say; an' he seen the withered woman put nine long pins into the left palm; an' they tied id wid the black hemp-sthring, in the divil's name. God keep us from his evil ways! then they berred the corpse agin, an' he seen 'em goin' round an' round the grave, backard an' forard, in the blessed moon-shine, shinin' on their bad doins; afther nine days an' nights he went wid 'em again, an' they had the same corpse up agin; an' takin' the pins frum the hand, they tied the black sthring round the thumb, an' through an' through the fingers, or what was left iv 'em, an' the pins had the charm on 'em, an' the charm was done."

"Did he give id to the colleen?" asked Andy.

"No, Andy; fur his conscience sthruck him, an' he went an' confessed all, an' threw the pin into the runnin' wather, an' parformed his penance; but the girl, pityin' him mooch, an' out o' thanks fur not bewitchin' her in a wrong way, let him do id in a right way, a little time afther, an' all ended in a christhen manner. But to cum back to Dora Shea.

"The bocchoch put his charm on Dora, lavin' her one iv the pins, an' went his road, sure an' sarten of what was to come about; for thrue it is, Andy, that poor Dora, the pride iv her father, an' the love o' the world, soon went afther him. From that day to this, auld Shea, Pierce's father's father, 'ud never let a beggarbody see the inside iv his house; many's the one he whipped away from id; but one in particlar. It was a cauld blowin' night, in winther time, when a poor tattered crature cum to his dour, an' axed charity fur the love o' God, houldin' a baby in her arms, an' the snow fallin' on the both, an' they amost naked; a little scrap o' food she begged fur herself an' her babby, fur she had the faintness wid hunger, an' a night's shelther in any hole or corner undher his roof; bud he only tuck his heavy horsewhip, an' slashed her back into the dhrift an' could o' the storm, fur the ould man's heart was scalded sore by his daughther's loss, an' hardened, an' what id usen't to be, so that, frum the hour she left him, he hever riz his head, nor opened his hand in charity; he whipped the poor nightbeggar frum his gate, I say, till, as the shiverin' crature ran frum his blows, she screeched out

her name, an' it was Dora, his own child; bud the change o' want an' woe was on her, an' he that nursed her on his knee, an' for seventeen years followed her wid eyes o' love, as she sat by his side, or moved round his house—her father, Andy a-cuishla, didn't know her, and sure she was never heard of afther."

"God help her, Bridge, bud she met a bad fate; I wondher, Bridge honey, I never hard o' that story afore."

"They don't like to have id talked about, becase it's a blot on the family; but when will you be goin' to Sheeum-na-Sheeog, Andy?" They rose to part.

"Wid sparrow-chirp in the mornin', plaise God I live an' do well."

"Musha, loock an' speed to you, Andy a-vourneen, an' take care o' yoursef, and keep out o' the way o' the good people."

"Faith, an' I will so, or no fault o' mine, Bridge;—och, you crature, how I longs to make my own o' you!"

"Mysef 'ud be glad the time was cum too, Andy: bud now it's far in the night, an' I moost be up two hours afore day, becase we have a week's churnin' to do in the mornin'; and so, good night, an' God be wid you."

After some tender expostulations on the part of Andy, and—but we are discreet; any of our readers who happen to be lovers, or who have been, and we believe this includes a pretty considerable majority of those who shall delight in our pages, may easily imagine, or recollect, how lovers generally separate; and thus, no matter obout the distinction of rank, they will have the parting of Bridge and Andy; he stealing off in his stocking-vamps, that he shouldn't awaken any of the household, while she remained to say her prayers, with her back to the fire, in which pious and comfortable vein and position she did not forget her wonted "pather-an'-avy," for the good of the soul and body of her own Andy Awling.

CHAPTER XIII.

HERETOFORE, a description of persons, known by the general denomination of bocchochs, infested Ireland, of whom indeed some traces yet

remain, but to a comparatively trifling extent. These people resembled, in their practices and habits, the gypsies of other countries (who, it is perhaps remarkable, never were known in the sister island), differing from them only in the circumstance of their not being a distinct race, or the descendants of one. A crafty, knavish, and withal talented fraternity, they lived well by practising on the charity, the superstitions, the unwariness, or the terrors of their more simple countrymen; and from the various ailments they exhibited, or were skilled in counterfeiting, as well as from their begging profession, came their general name of "bocchochs," "lame people," or "lame beggars:" for they appeared with broken or distorted limbs or features; affected blindness; or compelled sympathy by the display of loathsome sores, deceptively caused by the application of well-known caustic herbs to the skin.

From this it may be inferred that their popular denomination of bocchochs was but very partially merited; the fact is, they were for the most part hale and well-looking, when they doffed their various disguises, and assembled together to enjoy the profits of their knavery; or when a fellow, who during the day had

seemed lame or blind, cast away, with his old clothes, his assumed defect, and joined in riot and debauchery, and without suspicion, those from whose charity and credulity he had extorted the means of spending as freely as the richest among them.

Following their occupation of mendicants, they frequented fairs and markets; and at one other place of popular resort were to be met in the greatest numbers. It is sufficiently known that throughout Ireland there were, and on a diminished scale still are, in certain districts, holy wells, each sacred to some particular saint, whither the very devout portion of the people repair, on the festival of the beatified patron, to perform self-inflicted acts of atoning pilgrimage and prayer: and, among such crowds, the boc-chochs most successfully displayed their deformities, or else imposed on the open-mouthed credulous by exhibiting, in their own persons, pretended miraculous cures, avowed to have been performed at the shrine where the pilgrims were assembled. Some were happily restored to sight, who never had a mote in their eye; others recovered the use of a limb that, at least in the exercise of running or filching, had never been much paralyzed; and the stentorian recital

of such wonders, mixed with seasonable appeals to the charity and zeal of the auditors, never failed to bring them large "offerings:" others sold rosaries or wooden crucifixes, to create an opportunity for their accomplices to pick the pockets of those who were gathered around, making purchases.

Even here their accomplishments did not end. The best *Keeners*, or reciters of the Keenthecaun, were to be found among them; and, well patronised for the exercise of their spontaneous talent in elegiac poety over the dead,—at which, from constant practice, they had acquired great facility,—they trudged through the country, from wake to wake; their retreat from such places being generally remarkable for a simultaneous disappearance of every thing that could be carried off. They were concerned, indeed, in all petty robberies, either as principals or accessories, and known to be the most approved channels for the disposal of stolen goods; their wandering habits, and skill in disguising their local derivation, greatly assisting them in this agency; for the bocchochs passed every where for strangers; in Leinster, they were Munstermen, and, in Munster, Leinster-men, as their

altered and well-feigned accent and idiom, in either province, plainly evinced.

Bridge Chree has truly informed us that their character for witchcraft was high; and altogether the peasantry dreaded them to excess. If refused relief, or but scantily afforded it, they threatened vengeance; and vengeance was sure to follow. The father trembled lest his daughter should be lured away; the mother trembled lest her infant should be kidnapped; or, if neither of these grounds of apprehension existed, the destruction of property was dreaded; and cattle found dead without marks of violence, and therefore attributed to the witchcraft of the disobliged bocchoch, or the mysterious removal of all portable articles of domestic use, was a cause for behaving hyprocritically civil to the wandering beggars; who thus, when no place of general assemblage attracted them, rambled about singly, from house to house, living luxuriously and lazily on the abhorring conciliations their superior cunning and cleverness commanded.

So much of preface was found necessary, in addition to Bridge's anecdotes, to introduce the following true scene and situation.

In a narrow lane, among the very outskirts of the straggling and dirty suburbs of Kilkenny, lived a little woman, who had a less mother. Her name was Christien Moore; though her neighbour, Molly Dungan, in consequence of their many battles concerning Molly's pig and Christien's brood of young ducks, called her, contemptuously alluding to her stature, Chreestheena, or wee Christien; for Molly had a juvenile swine that would sometimes regale itself on one of Christien's ducklings, at which the sufferer fluently rated pig and mistress, and Molly would excuse the esteemed animal by pleading its youth and want of sense; until, words growing high, our present subject received the epithet we have recorded, and, calling all the vinegar into her vinegar system, charged Molly in return with being "a virago;" Christien having once travelled as part of a soldier's baggage, and learned some good English; but this agreeable gossip is far away from our present purpose.

Chreestheena knew fifty summers, and her mother closed on a century. They were tireless spinners; one spun with a distaff, the other with a wheel; and the product of their eternal industry was manufactured into coarse blankets,

coarse sheets, and ticking. Creestheena had had her husbands three, and, it was whispered, was now on the look out for a fourth; with this, however, we again say, we can have no concern. It is only mentioned for the purpose of entitling us to relate, that she had employed her second good man, with a hatchet borrowed from a neighbouring cooper, to chop points, on short pieces of oak wattles, and then drive them, at short intervals, into the mud floor of her cabin, next the wall, until some ten or twelve of them encompassed a space, little more than the length and breadth of an ordinary-sized man. Against the outer sides of these, the still-obedient husband laid rough boards; and the area, so contrived, was next filled with dried bark brought from a contiguous tan-yard; over which Christien put a good coarse tick, stuffed with oat-chaff; a bolster of the same; sheets coarse enough for a Scotchman infected with the plague of his country; and, lastly, a pair of heavy warm blankets; tick, sheet, and blankets, all derived from the spinning of herself and her little blind mother. In process of time six good beds of this formation and material were arranged round her cabin, to the occupation of any one of which any person was welcome who

paid a penny per night for the repose therein to be obtained. There was a fire-place in the hotel, but, agreeably to custom, without the superfluity of a chimney; so that the stifling sulphur of the stone-coal of her native city filled the atmosphere of the always confined spot, and might be considered a foretaste of the fumigation said, in every Christian country, excepting Wales, to prevail in the lower regions; and to which, if report err not, some of her penny customers were, as a needful anticipation, well entitled. But Chreestheena's "fire without smoke" was generally bright and hot, and her beds seldom empty.

The night on which Andy Awling and Bridge Chree enjoyed their own peculiar blaze, and their own peculiar conversation in Ned Shea's kitchen, three of the very description of person's of whom she and we have last spoken had taken up their quarters for the evening at Chreestheena's well-swept hearth. For the weighty consideration of two pence, instead of a halfpenny, each, they bargained to have entire possession of the premises; and it will clearly be seen that, by this arrangement, Christien was no loser; while, for the further consideration of sixpence halfpenny, of common stock, she con-

sented to replenish the fire for their exclusive use; and, having done so, she led her wee mother to bed, into an inner apartment, where they together enjoyed the luxury of a bedstead to themselves; Chreestheena congratulating her own heart on the profitable bargain she had struck, as, besides the saving of wear and tear in three of the beds of her hotel, she had received for the coals three-pence farthing above prime cost.

So soon as the hostess was heard to snore, Risththarde Bocchoch (Limping Dick) pulled from his two-sided wallet a pair of dead ducks, having their necks awry, and, skilfully plucking them, raised up one of the ticks, and proceeded to deposit under it the superfluous feathers: Padhre Keaoch (Blind Peter) brought forth three large skregs or cakes of brown bread, remarking that the crust looked to him a little over-browned; and Sheemun Croonawnee (Simon the Whining Singer) added two large horns of genuine smuggled brandy, such as it would be difficult in the same city of Kilkenny to match at the present day, and which he had received to bribe his silence respecting a hogshead he by chance saw dropped in a certain hiding-place, whither he had subsequently, for

another bribe, introduced the district exciseman: and such were the materials of the *petit souper* of the three worthies.

Having completely plucked, and otherwise prepared his ducks, Risththarde, by the agency of a large pocket blade with which he was seldom unprovided, dismembered and arranged them for broiling; and good white wooden trenches were brought down from Christien's dresser to hold the dainty fare.

While thus employed, "Bow, wow, wow," exclaimed Padhre Keaoch's black shock dog;

"And, who the duoul is thumpin, now?" said his excellent master, as a sounding knock, as if from the head of a heavy stick, came to the door.

"Let him just stay abroad, whoever he is," said Sheeum Croonawnee, "fur a dhrop o' this holy wather 'ill never pass his breath."

The knock came again.

"Who's that, I say?" asked Risththarde, in a gruff voice, "wakenin' honest people at this hour o' the night."

"Musha, aye, let him stay at the wrong side o' the dour, Sheemun; an' I'd kiss the book that he'll never get the taste o' these ducks; Paudge Keefe that owned 'em didn't give lave.'

Knock, knock, knock, knock.

"Go out o' that wid yourself," roared Padhre, "an' let poor people take their night's sleep,"

"Arrah, what a sleep you're in, Padhre Keaoch," said a voice outside, "I smell what's good, an' must have my share."

"The black duoul whip me round the market-cross," resumed Padhre, "bud it's one iv oursefs, boys: an' more nor that, I'm a blind cullawn iv a downright arnest, an' deaf along wid being blind, if it isn't Shaun-law-thcaum, every inch iv him."

"Och, iv it's that poor desolate crature, the Lord forbid we'd keep him abroad in the could o' the night," said Risththarde.

"'Twouldn't be the part iv a christhen to do any other thing," said Padhre, "an' afther all he'll get a sprinklin' o' the holy wather."

"What's the name is on you?" asked Sheemun.

"Shaun-law-thcaum I'm called by them that knows me well," answered the voice; then added in a whining, snuffling cadence—"Good tinder christhens, look wid an eye iv marcy on a poor desolate crature that hasn't the use iv his own hands to arn a male o' victuals for him-

self an' his ould bed-rid mother, an' four small brothers an' sisthers, at home."

"That 'ill do," said Sheemun; "stay a little, you poor sowl, an' you must cum in, fur God's sake."

"May he mark you wid grace, an' pour a blessin' on you an' yours," resumed the voice, still in its professional key: then familiarly—"make speed, Sheemun, fur I'm could an' hungry."

But here arose a little unforeseen difficulty. Chreestheena had, according to wholesome practice, locked the door of her caravansary, lest the night her guests and her blankets might happen to vanish together. Sheemun Cronawnee went to arouse her; and when she saw, suddenly startled from her sleep, a black, wicked-looking fellow standing, rushlight in hand, over her in her bed, Christien screamed with all her soul, and was joined by her blind mother, who, because she could not see any thing, feared every thing, and a thousand things too terrible to mention; when at length made sensible of what was wanted, she would by no means entrust another with the key, but arose herself to admit the new comer; and finally,

when arrived at the door, she would by no means open it, unless two pence additional was paid down by those already in possession: her terms being agreed to and fairly met, however, Chreestheena at once gave the visitor admission, without ever looking at the sort of person that entered.

"Och, you three schamin' rogues," said Shaun, as he joined his old friends; "well I knew where to find you."

"An' what, in the name o' the vargin, brought you a ramblin', at sich an hour?" he was asked.

"Why I cum all the ways from Garrodhe Donohoo, to seek ye."

"An' what does Garrodhe want iv us?"

"That's a story to be tould: you must, all three o' you, make the best haste you can to him, afther the fair, next Wednesday night."

"Och, very well; we ought to have good getherins at the fair, boys:" said Sheemun.

"God is a plentiful providher," replied Risththarde.

"Are you as blind as ever, Padhre?" asked Shaun.

"The desolate darkness!—a poor crature stone blind! an' that can't see the day from the

night!"—said Padhre, throwing back his head, and half-closing and turning up the whites of his eyes.

"Ho, ho," Shaun resumed, "we're just four great big rogues, fit to thrapse the world, wide; bud come, boys; the night's goin' on, an' we're all in a fair way fur atin', a bit; Risththarde, let yoursef, an' poore Padhre Keaoch, cook up the prog; an' as Gorrodhe skinned a sheep to-day, sure I brought ye somethin' to help the faste."

"Graw-ma-chree you war, Shaun, I never seen worse by you," said Risththarde; and, while the cooks were busy, Shaun and Sheemun Croonawnee held converse in an under tone.

"Well, Sheemun; an' you didn't thrap Rhia Doran, yet?"

Avoch, no, God help me."

"Arrah, now, Sheemun, lave off them blessed sayins; they're words your rogue's tongue has no call to, among friends, any how, that knows you betther nor the mother that bore you."

"You spake right, Shaun. Well; as you war axin' me about Rhia Doran, mysef could never get the other body along wid him, sence the first moment Crohoore set me afther 'em."

"Spake lower, Sheemun; them two ar'n't to know sacrets; they're too bould an' hearty."

"That's a thruth; bud, Shaun, I'm afther thinkin' it ud be a great shame fur me to be the manes o' takin' o' the life o' Jack Doran; he desarves betther at my hands."

"How is that, now, Sheemun?"

"May I never die doin' sin—"

"Arrah, then, give over your purtendin' sort o' talk, I say; spake wid a curse in your mouth, like a world's rogue as you are, if the plain words won't do."—

"You moost just lave me to myself, Shaun," said Sheemun; "it comes in a way nat'ral to my hand, an' I can't give it over."

"Then you may go to the duoul wid a prayer in your cheek, iv you like id; bud you war sayin' Jack Doran deserved betther by you, nor to get his gallows end on your account."

"May the heavens be my bed if he doesn't; he has money *galore*,* an' never spares id on a body he loves; an' that's mysef."

Duv you mane to hould back, now, Sheemun Croonawnee?" asked Shaun, sternly.

"Musha, God forbid; I'll stick close on him, mornin', noon, an' night, 'till I can ketch him an'

* In plenty.

the t'other at a grab; an' then I'm done wid him; an' he's done wid the sinful and sorrowful world: au' you may tell Crohoore the same frum me. Bud what does Gorrodhe want wid us, in arnest, to-morrow night, Shaun?"

"He wants you to be in the Glin o' Ballyfoile, where Pierce Shea 'ill come, too; an' I don't know what I'm about, bud you must help to tie him, hand an' foot, an' run wid him to the ould haunted place, up in Munsther."

"The Lord forgi' me my sins!—did I hear you spakin' right, Shaun? did you say young Pierce Shea?"

"Divil an' other bud his own sef."

"Well, Crohoore-na-bilhoge, above all I ever hard tell iv, it's yourself has quare ways in you," ejaculated Sheemun, clasping his hands.

The cooks interrupted the dialogue.

"Here, now, an' may the first bit choke ye; come here, an' thry can you ate, as well as whisper an' talk, you cullodgin' rogues," cried Padhre Keaoch, the banquet being ready. The summons was readily obeyed; and all gathered round a small deal table, and despatched the broiled ducks, and the mutton, also stolen, and the twice smuggled brandy, with the ease and goût of genuine bocchochs; at which occupation

we shall leave them, not having any inclination to remain in such company longer than was necessary for the progress of our story.

CHAPTER XIV.

A FAIR-DAY is a day of great bustle and excitement in the city of Kilkenny. Being chiefly a mart for black cattle and pigs, the streets are invaded at an early hour, and the ears of the quiet, snoring citizens outraged by the unusual noise of lowing cows and bullocks, their trotting or rushing along under peaceable chamber windows, the shouting of their drivers, and the clattering of alpeens on their back-bones and horns; while, among them, the curious eye, that has a taste for such studies, may easily distinguish, by its bold step, its erect hand, its impatient bellow, and its staring eyes, distended in admiration of the change from its native fields and streams, to the "streets paved with marble,"

over which it paces,—the kine of the good fat pasturage, from the poor cotter's half-starved cow, that moves in sober and plodding gait, indifferent gaze, and drooping neck, careless where it goes or is, since no change can be for the worse; a good illustration of its human attendant, who, lean as the beast he follows, in tattering garb, cringing and trailling pace, and sharp vacant countenance, conveys, at a glance, the broken and grovelling spirit of conscious poverty, and want of self-importance. There might be observed, too, the strongest contrast, in outward ease and inward content of mind, in the persons of the pampered swine and its thin proprietor, between whom and his self-willed and obstinate pet, many strange and ridiculous struggles occasionally arose; both disputing and wrangling for an hour together, to see which should have his way.

Besides these principal articles of sale, the fair of Kilkenny offered many other rare and tempting commodities to the country visitor. Coopers, brogue-makers, hatters, nailers, and makers of chairs, tables, stools, and bedsteads, displayed the various products of their separate ingenuity; bright crockery-ware glittered around; and when we were in our youthful

days, as at the time of this tale we were, there used to be a display of goodly pewter plates and dishes, and two-handled pots and pints; but the use of delf has done away with these durable commodities, which now exhibit but as the heir-loom ornaments of the country dresser: and the excise laws, restricting to those who can afford a license the manufacture of home-brewed ale, have sent the pots and pints to the public house, so that general demand no longer requires them in the fair. Under rude awnings of sack or blanket, and spread out on doors that had been taken off their hinges for the purpose, numerous establishments of fancy articles further attracted the eye; such as knives and forks, scissars, garters, thimbles, threads, tapes, and a great and rich variety of other nick-nacks. Similarly disposed on unpainted deal doors, or planks, there was gingerbread, and all such humble confectionary; the coarsest fruits in season; white and yellow cheese, and wooden trenchers and noggins, and the *et ceteras* of the turner's ware, picturesquely thrown together. The proprietors of these commodities might be seen, early in the morning, running in breathless haste to secure good and safe spots for opening their sales; and while they clat-

tered along in by no means silent emulation, or contested with each other the right to a favourite stand; while the cattle bellowed, and the sheep bleated, and the horses neighed, and the headstrong pigs ran through their grunting gamut, and the surrounding rush and roar of a thronging multitude was heard over all, startling, as we have before said, was the commencement of a fair day to the tranquil and by no means commercial or bustling citizens of Kilkenny.

On such a morning, too, the milk-maids, coming in as usual to serve their city customers, with snow-white pails skilfully poised on their heads, without hand to hold them; the servant-maids—in fact, all the maids, and some of the matrons too—make it a point to ask their "fairing" of all their male acquaintance; less, it is conjectured, in hope of profit, than to hear over and over again the shrewd reply that "they are the fairest seen that day." To the younger part of the generation it is the day of days, long sighed for and rapturously welcomed; for holidays are granted in every school throughout town, on the score of not exposing poor little boys to the throng of the fair, a precaution of which the poor little boys remember not a word; besides they are on a gleeish and

greedy look out for their matured and monied acquaintances, "to put their fairing on them," with a prospective eye to the dissipation of the gingerbread-stall, or toy-booth.

Let us, in kindly feeling, be permitted to dwell a moment longer on the well-remembered features of a scene with which are associated the purest pleasures that even advanced and experienced life can supply—the pleasures of early and innocent recollection.

In flocked the young country girls, fair and fresh, and plump and rosy, ostensibly, perhaps, to buy a pair of garters, a row of pins, or a ribbon, but, in their best and quaint attire, really to see and to be seen by their rural squires and admirers; to gèt their fairing, in one shape or other, and in every shape to partake of the unloosed and effluent spirit of holiday enjoyment. We will omit any positive mention of the occasional fracas between those same squires, the heroes of the cudgel and alpeen, in systematic arrangement, of their interminable and mysterious causes of dispute; such incidents, though characteristic, being at thè same time an intrusion on the pleasing reminiscences we wish to indulge and communicate; the bocchochs, who sung and bawled their miseries at

every turn, we will not, however, forget; nor their rivals, the ballad-singers—and oh! none are like to thy ballad-singers, green land of song and of our birth!—nor, their competitors still, the reciters of prose effusions, who, in the blotted rather than printed slips of tea-paper in their hands, found not a word of the wonderful or facetious rigmarole that issued from their mouths, and yet that gulled, over and over, the gaping or grinning rustic.

In fact, we might, with our delighted readers, pass a good hour in the now mid-day bustle and uproar of the fair; we might pause to admire the more than Ciceronian art of the buyer and the seller of "a slip of a pig;" the half-proffered earnest-money, technically slapped down on the open palm of the vender; his demur; the seemingly determined turn-off of the purchaser, and the affected carelessness of the other, who, meantime, watches shrewdly every motion of his man; the expeeted return; "the splitting of the differ;" and at last the final close, one protesting he gave too much, and the other swearing he sold too cheap; but both sensible that the unconscious grunter has been obtained exactly at his fair value. Pleased might we stop to view and hear the temptations of the

nick-nack merchants, and the longing and wandering side looks or whispers of the girls at the finery; or the extravagant country-boy, who, despising cakes and gingerbread, treats himself to a penny-worth of curdy cheese, and smacks his palate as, little by little, he consumes the luxury; or the real oratory of the flax-seller, and the imperturbable wisdom of the cunning old woman, carefully examining, after all his flourishes, the article she had not yet purchased; or the fine national byperbole of the felt-hat vender, who, leaving Sterne's perukier not a word, assures the dubious peasant that the hard and bare surface of the felt "blows like any meadow!"—We might even peep into the regular shops along the main street, and witness, in one or all, the self-flattering praises of the dealers on their goods, and the suspicious and heretic looks of the country buyers, certain in exaggerated mistrust, that, along with hearing nought but misstatement, they can purchase at five times less than what they are asked;—an hour, did we say?—alas! the whole day,—or else our memory is treacherous, or our tastes altered—might be well spent in the ever-changing varieties of the fair; and we regret that now, when we have not rehearsed the hundredth part of its

novelties, pleasures, and incidents, we are no longer free to indulge our teeming garrulity; but the story to which we have yoked ourselves requires immediate attention.

Of all the bocchochs that day eminent, none distinguished themselves so much, or gained more commiseration or money by their well-feigned miseries, and well-uttered appeals, than Chreestheena's four guests of the former night. They had, according to usual practice, separated in different quarters of the fair, and for some time continued their efforts apart; until, late in the day, Shemun Croonawnee came, as if by accident, upon Shaun-law-theaum's walk, gave him a secret sign, and both withdrew into a narrow lane, that branched from the main street about half way in its course or extent.

"A favourable judgment to me, Shaun," said Sheemun, "bud I think I have Rhia Doran and the other nabbed at last; my eyesighth if I didn't see 'em both discoorsin' together, a little while agone, in the thick o' the fair."—

"*Nor-i-een-thou-lath,* bud you're a great fellow iv a bocchoch; did Doran see you?"—

"Och, God be good to us, what 'ud be the matther, supposin' he did? Duv you think he'd

know Ned Farrel, wid the two eyes he fixed on poor Sheemun Croonawnee?"—

"Sorrow a fear, I believe; an' did you make off' who his comarade was?"—

"Lave me alone fur that; sure I never let him out o' my sight, till I thracked him to his den, an' then I had all was worth hearin' about him; an' we have him to get whenever we want him."

"*Ma-ho-bouchal* you war; you'll be a welcome boy to Crohoore, this night."

"Yes; an' the richest bocchoch that goes *shoolin*,* by that job. Bud, Shaun, did you see Pierce Shea on the fair?"

"'Tis a truth that I did."

"Well; look out for him, agin; in one hour, if he's seen in the town, he'll give work to the *skibbeeah*;† I hard as mooch on my thravels; an' I'll tell you how I got the knowledge, over the next pot of ale; bud be off to him now, or we'll never have him in our hands: an' that 'ud set Crohoore as mad as the ould duoul."

"Och, by my father's sowl, whoever he was, an' wherever he is, at the prasant time, they mus'n't take him frum us in sich a way."

* Strolling. † Jack Ketch.

"Well; stir your stumps, an' do your work."

And Shaun issued forth into the main street singing, in doleful cadence, an Irish elegy, descriptive of how his house, wife, goods, and chattels, had been burnt, and his fourteen children scorched, and his own arms and breast disfigured in the effort to save them, as the compassionate might plainly see; and Sheemun exhibited his hands and wrists crippled from his birth, and also recited his poetical appeal to the charity and tenderness of all hearers.

Pierce Shea had, indeed, attended the fair of Kilkenny that day, when his ears were startled with the news of the execution of six of the men in whose company he had witnessed only two days before the attack on the dragoons. It was assizes time; their apprehension took place as soon as a sufficient detachment could be sent out from Kilkenny, after the intelligence of the serjeant; and the unhappy peasants got but one night for preparation. Hearing this, Pierce naturally wished to be safe at home. As he was quite a stranger to those who had rescued him, and whose voluntary assistance sprung from their disinclination, as White-boys, to allow him to be sacrificed to his laudable zeal of the previous

night, he confidently reckoned on a safe concealment within the limits of his father's farm, where no one, save Doran and his corps, suspected even his sortie to the proctor; for Pierce, reasonably apprehending the paternal displeasure, had not acquainted his father with a single circumstance of his illegal proceedings.

Amid a throng of cattle and of people, Pierce now stood meditating a sudden retreat from the fair, when a wild-looking woman, her hair streaming about her shoulders, and her face pale and distracted, rushed towards him. At first she seemed as if hurrying on without a determined course; but when near him she stopped suddenly, and glaring full in his face, addressed him in Irish—

"Hah!—you are there!—you were not hanged and beheaded to-day—and why were you not?—you earned your death as bravely as Matthew Moran, my husband—I saw you with these eyes among the sassenach troopers! —Aye—he died for freeing you! and by the judge above, who is now judging Matthew, that is foul play!—look! here is his blood on me!—I was at the block—the head rolled at my feet!— and,—(whisper)—I have it with me—I'm steal-

ing it home—but tell no one—they would have taken it from my hands—but I can run fast—fast!"—

And seeming to forget the former part of her address she disappeared, shrieking wildly, among the distant crowd.

This rencounter, which had fastened upon him the regards of the people around, froze Pierce to the spot, while it supplied still stronger reasons for a speedy escape homeward, of which he was not yet able to avail himself. Before he could rally his senses, a different kind of person addressed him.

"Give a help to a poor disabled body, one o' God's cratures, like yourself, good charitable young man," said a miserable beggar, standing close before him, an old hat, tied by a string, hanging down from the neck to the breast, his arms bare, and shockingly twisted from the wrists to the elbows.

Scarce conscious of what he did, Pierce drew forth a small piece of money and dropped it into the hat.

"May he that gives the riches increase your store, a-vich-ma-chree; an', fur your charity to the poor an' the forlorn, listen well to the words I'm goin' to say."

The beggar advanced nearer; but Pierce, whose thoughts were still fixed on the frantic woman, did not appear to attend.

"Son of the Sheas—Pierce Shea!" resumed the man, in a low but distinct voice: Pierce started at the sound of his name, and stared in terror, on the speaker.

"Speed home from the fair, without loss iv time," continued the mendicant, still whispering closely; "In half an hour, iv you stand in the sthreets o' Kilkenny, your day o' life is gone; while I talk, they come to seek you; while I stay here, there is one tellin over to the justhuse-o'-pace,* your night doins on Peery Clancy, and your day-work among the throopers; speed, speed I say to you, an' don't hear my words widout heedin' 'em; let no grass grow undher your horse's feet, an' no wind bate your race on the road to Clarah—and—mind me still—take the Wind-gap road."

A suspicion of treachery—of an arrangement to seize him on a particular road, instead of attempting his apprehension amid the throng and riot of the fair, darted across Pierce's mind, and he asked—

* English, Irished.

"How does it happen you can know me, and whence is your intelligence?"

"Lose no time askin' questions, only put your hand into my hat, and take out what you'll find in id," was the answer.

In one of his visits to Kilkenny, Pierce had got his miniature painted in a sort of way; it might lay claims to some general likeness, but we promise no further for its fidelity as a portrait, or its excellence as a work of art; such as it was, however, he had presented it to his young mistress, and she sufficiently prized it for the giver's sake, and for the novelty of the toy; indeed, Pierce had reason to know that Alley always wore it round her neck, and to believe that, in his occasional absence, she never went to rest without calling it twenty fond names, and kissing it twenty times over. He now held it in his hand.

"The owner o' that sends you word to be bid by me; an' so, stand here no longer, iv you wish in your heart to see her again," the beggar went on, as Pierce remained speechless, looking alternately from him to the miniature—

"I'll see *you* again, before the danger comes on you; but now for the last time, speed!"—

At this moment old Ned Shea, who had gone

some distance to look at a drove of bullocks, called loudly to his son; Pierce turned to make a sign of speedy attendance, and when he resumed his position, the beggar was gone.

He looked round and round, but could catch no glimpse; the man, though mingled with the crowd, must not, he thought, be far off; he rushed in every direction to seek him; still vainly: and then, joining to his terrors of legal apprehension, excessive wonder at the beggar's intimations, knowledge of his affairs, and connexions with his mistress, Pierce, divided between a hope of friendly meaning and a fear of treacherous intent, was soon on the road homewards; choosing, in the teeth of his worst thoughts, that named by the mendicant.

CHAPTER XV.

NOTWITHSTANDING his serious arrangements, Andy Awling could not, until the morning of the fair day of Kilkenny, when his master's absence

from home gave him command of his own time, put into execution his purpose of visiting Sheeum-na-Sheeog; but on that morning he took care to set out, as the day dawned, on his perilous mission: and the tender-hearted Bridge Chree did not fail to rise also, to wish luck to her lover's laudable undertaking.

It is necessary here to relate as concisely as possible, and on the authority of Bridge Chree, Andy, and indeed the general repute of the whole country, who Sheeum-na-Sheeog was, what his profession, and from what circumstances he had been led to embrace it.

First, then, he was not a native of the place where he resided; and when, twenty years before, he had suddenly appeared in the neighbourhood of Clarah, no one could tell whence he came; but every one was able to supply the following anecdotes.

Friday night is the night of the week least eligible to meet the good people; but, on a Friday, Sheeum had been to a fair, and was returning home, having a little overstepped the limits of moderation, as to the quantity of liquor he had quaffed, but still no way impaired, in his own apprehension, as to the clearness and

soundness of his judgment. Although the night was an extremely dark night, in November, he had such reliance on himself, and he knew the path-ways across the fields and bogs so well, that he could entertain no doubt of his progress directly homewards: nay, the light in his father's cabin, over the edge of the fen, already beamed brightly to his vision; and on he journeyed, alternately whistling the Fox's Sleep, or lustily bawling out a verse of the Anacreontic Cruiskeen-Lawn.

After a reasonable ramble, however, Sheeum began to suspect that his father's cabin was, on this night, farther off than usual, and that, with all his walking, he was as far from it as ever. Not being able clearly to comprehend how this could happen, or not allowing himself time to engage in the investigation, he had nothing for it but to redouble his speed and energies, and push forward. But still and still the well-known light burned distant as before; so that he either was bewitched himself, and did not move an inch, although he thought he did, or else the cabin moved with a vengeance, receding imperceptibly as he advanced: or perhaps some vague ideas that he was bewildered by the Fodheen-

Marahull,* and a victim to its untimely pranks, at last dawned in his mind.

While he was yet opening his eyes wide enough to take a good observation, the treacherous flame gave a few quivers and capers, as if making game of him, and instantly disappeared, so that he was left in profoundest darkness, not able to see any thing, or without any thing to be seen; and down he sunk in increased misgivings, heart-ache, and head-ache. Suddenly the brisk notes of a bag-pipe, in capital tune, broke the horrid silence; and, pricking up his ears, they plainly informed him, beyond possibility of doubt, that the always-loved, and now more than ever welcome strains, could not be far distant. This was blessed relief; he regained his legs, and groped and crept in the direction of the music. As he approached it—for it evidently grew louder—cheering peals of laughter, song, and conversation, also struck on Sheeum's comforted ear; a high "rath" obstructed his course; he hastened to wind round it; but, when he had doubled the base of the little hill, a most unex-

* Will-o'the Wisp; or according to the shortest translation we could ever get of these two words—the fellow of the burning sod that sets people's heads giddy.

pected scene of brilliance and festivity, at only a few yards before him, dazzled his eyes and ravished his senses.

There were no tapers; he had before proved the night afforded no moon; and sunshine it assuredly could not be; yet the spot, and that spot alone, on which sported a multitude of little men and women, beamed with exceeding and fascinating splendour. There was no musician; no hiding-place for any; not even an instrument that one might endow with the power of playing up of itself; and yet the music, the sweetest he had ever heard, went merrily on. A dainty board, indeed, there was; but covered with viands and liquors such as he had never before seen: he could recognize no potatoes: nothing he might call mutton, or beef, or pork (though of these substances, it must be owned, Sheeum was not the best judge, having contemplated or tasted them, in their boiled or roasted state, only twice or thrice at a wedding or a christening); yet, unable as he might be to identify the different species of viands before him, all certainly looked most tempting; and then the liquor that went round, quaffed out of vessels like in form and colour to the meadow "butter-cup," was not ale, nor wine, nor brandy, but

resembled, if any earthly thing, the divine whiskey just then coming into sublunary use, for it was silvery, and pellucid, without a bubble or a head on it,

The little people all wore grass-green "sherkeens," or short jackets; various nether garments, with, meantime, a general distinction by which the sexes were made manifest; and red conical caps, and gay feathers. Some stretched on the sward, feasting, or sipping their nectar, or chattering blithely or rapidly, or laughing loudly; some were divided into pairs, and seemed making love; and amazed to the uttermost Sheeum was, to behold a blooming female cousin of his own,—the selfsame girl whom he thought he had seen dead and buried three months before, though it was now evident a mock corpse had been left in her stead—listening, in an abstracted air, to a brisk little fairy, who with his cap set smartly on one side of his head, and a tight though minikin leg stretched out as they sat together, appeared doing his very best at the ear of an unwilling damsel. But by far the greater part of the assembly engaged themselves in dancing; and, sure enough, they tripped it away, in frolicsome time, to the real Irish jig played by the invisible music.

A man with one eye might, after having for

a moment contemplated this scene, know that he looked at a fairy revel; and, with his two good eyes, Sheeum could not long remain in suspense or uncertainty, of the fact. Silently and cautiously he determined tomove off from so dangerous a neighbourhood, but his legs refused their office; and, when he found himself almost literally chained to the spot, so great was Sheeum's consternation that his teeth chattered, his knees knocked against each other, the hairs bristled up from the pores of his skin, and a cold perspiration ran down his face. He bethought to say a prayer; but though his priest could not reproach him with ignorance, nay, though on the contrary he was rather a favourite of the good man, Sheeum could no more recollect a word, "no more nor if he never set eyes on a soggarth's horse;" until, after many efforts, his tongue, instead of obeying the fair intentions of his thoughts, let out a thundering Irish curse— "Thonomon-duoul!" said Sheeum, aloud; and instantly the feast, the music, the sparkling light, the glancing and busy throng, every thing passed away, like the lightning's flash, amid a general shout or outcry of ten thousand tiny voices, and Sheeum, losing his remaining senses, fell helpless to the earth.

When he recovered, he was somewhere, he

knew not where; living he knew not how; but, at all events, in the fairies' dwelling. What he saw there, and what he did there, for ten long years, was not to be told, and he never told it; but when he came back, partly a free and forgiven agent, he made use of the secrets he had learned, no matter whether in joy or suffering, for the benefit of the surrounding neighbours—and for a small pecuniary consideration; which indeed he well earned, inasmuch as the good people would beat him black and blue upon almost all occasions when he interfered with their whims or pleasures.

Nor did Sheeum lack suitors or fees. Such men were considered public blessings, and revered and treated accordingly. Eternally and actively mischievous as the good people were, it would be difficult for poor powerless mortals to live were it not for the counteracting influence and assistance of Sheeum-na-Sheeog, and his brethren. He sometimes, though not always, cured those disfigured by fairy-blasts; he restored bewitched children; wrought charms on bewitched cows; and was eminently celebrated for pointing out where strayed cattle might be found; because, constantly forced to bear company with the fays in their nightly excursions,

far and wide, such matters naturally came under his observation.

He lived up in the hills, as Andy Awling has truly mentioned, in the direction Pierce Shea had at first taken in pursuit of Crohoore-na-bilhoge and Alley Dooling. The party led by Pierce did not fail to visit Sheeum's artlessly constructed dwelling; but, the door lying open, and affording free entrance, a glance was sufficient to assure them that the naked hovel, then completely untenanted, could afford no concealment to the objects of their search.

The spot in which Sheeum had raised it was, at the time of his industry, the midst of a wild solitude, though, at present, population and the progress of agriculture have entirely changed the face of the country. It was built within a few yards of the bed of a mountain-torrent—(the same, but further towards its source, over which Crohoore had leaped when pursued by Pierce Shea,) against an abrupt elevation, apparently for the purpose of having the hill-side to serve as one of the gables, and thus save time and trouble: the side-walls ran at right angles with the hill; a second gable, composed of rude stones cemented only with yellow clay, faced the stream; and through this gable, by

means of a low and fragile door, exclusive entrance was afforded to visitors, the air, and the light: in fact, it was the only orifice in the building. The roof, carelessly covered with rushes, fern, and furze, could scarcely be distinguished from the hill against which it rested, and from which these materials had been taken; so that a person, coming in the rear of the dwelling, might almost step upon it before he perceived it.

The outward physiognomy of this wild hovel bespoke its internal accommodation. Here and there, a few rough shelves of bog-wood, strewed with dried herbs, earthen vessels, and small phials, hung against the uneven walls; and from the edges appended black beetles of the largest species, and some *Dorch-Luchres*, the description of small lizard common in Ireland, much abhorred by the peasantry, though quite harmless. A deal table, and two low stools, formed the rest of the furniture. There was no appearance of a place reserved for sleeping; no hearth, hob, or chimney; a particular blackened spot by the wall shewed, however, that a blaze was occasionally kindled; and some furze, heaped against the bare hill-side opposite the entrance, seemed stored there for fuel.

This was a poor and cheerless residence for a man of such might as Sheeum-na-Sheeog; it served, however, well enough as an audience-chamber: he spent none of his hours of pleasure or privacy in it; it was known that during the night, mounted on a *thrawneen*, like themselves, he drove through the air with the good people—for many of their missions and occupations required the agency of mortal hands;—or, night and day, participated their festivity in the fairy hall of the rath against which his cabin was constructed; for persons who by chance strayed that way reported of the sound of mirth and music heard within it, sometimes at deep midnight, sometimes early in the morning, and sometimes in the outspread and sunny silence of noon itself; but, when such knowledge came on the wanderer's ear, he crossed himself, no matter what the hour, and fled away, resolving never again to visit the deserted place, and more than willing to compromise his curiosity with his terrors.

But, driven by irresistible motives, Andy Awling took the hill road to this very suspected solitude, on the morning of the fair of Kilkenny.

"Well; God, in his marcies, purtect you, Andy a-gra-bawn," sighed Bridge, as he set out, after having given him some good precautionary advice as to his behaviour in the awful presence of the fairy-man.

"Och, then, Bridge, your prayer is worth its weight in pure gould; an' mooch sarvice it 'ill be to me, I'm sure; so, here goes, in the name o' God."

When he had got a few paces, he bethought himself—

"Arrah, Bridge, a-lanna, won't you pelt the ould brogue afther me, fur loock."

"Well thought on, Andy, a chorra;"—and she stooped, plucked off her paved "pantoufle," and, in the energy of her zeal, flung it after Andy with too true an aim, and too superfluous a force. It smote him on the back of the head, with a violence that would have stove in the thin paper-skull of a genius—(we pay ourselves no compliment);—but Andy's substantial cranium only sounded under the blow, and he only staggered a little, as, putting his hand to the assaulted part, he exclaimed—

"Why, then, upon my conscience, Bridge, agra, an' that's as good as if I tuck my oath, iv there's loock or grace in id, you gave me

enough an' plenty, an' some to spare; musha, only I wouldn't do it—" he paused, rubbing his head, and looking at the brogue as if he wished to return it to the owner; but the dread of casting back his luck along with it made him give up his purpose; and at last he turned on his heel and set out in good earnest, as much out of humour with poor Bridge as his nature permitted, and adding in a grumble, "that tho' she meant well, she might have done the thing asier, any how."

Having gained the lonely dwelling of Sheeum-na-Sheeog, Andy took post at the angle of the side-wall, out of view of any one within, and, pulling off his hat, was about to commence, according to Bridge's instruction, and, indeed his own determinations, a preparatory prayer, when—"Come in, Andy Awling!"—said a sonorous voice from the hovel. There was a sudden finish to Andy's orisons; his jaw dropped; he opened his eyes wide as the lids would permit him; and it was not his fault if his ears also did not expand to listen. He had never beheld Sheeum-na-Sheeog; nor, to his knowledge, had Sheeum-na-Sheeog ever beheld him; and how, then, did the wizard know who was there?—or, indeed, since Andy had taken care

to approach without coming in sight of the entrance, how could he know any one at all was there? While pondering these things in some consternation, the voice again spoke.

"Andy Awling!—Andy Houlohan! come in to me, I say!"—

Andy turned the corner, and crossed the threshold, as if he were obeying some outward impulse, rather than acting by his own free will. He had to stoop low, in entering the hovel, and, when he again raised his eyes, he stood before one who could be no other than Sheeum-na-Sheeog.

"Ho; you are there, Andy Houlohan; why did you keep me waitin'? I expected you; *se chise*;"* and he pushed over a low stool, upon which Andy settled himself as commanded, though in doing so he was obliged to cripple his knees up to a level with his mouth.

Sheeum-na-Sheeog, although robust, was an old man; his almost snow-white locks hung about his yet fresh-coloured face. He wore a rusty blue great coat, fastened tight up to his chin; and a leathern belt was buckled round his waist. He had quivering black eyes, of which the expression, when they seized on

* Sit down.

Andy's dead stare, was, by the visitor, inwardly acknowledged as very unusual and disagreeable; altogether, Andy had never before found himself in the presence of a human creature so calculated to inspire feelings of awe, reverence, and mistrust. For a moment they silently regarded each other, from their opposite stools; Andy wearing the selfsame face he had unconsciously assumed when the first surprising words startled him outside the door. At length, the fairy man resumed.

"I see you can't spake; no matter; I'll save you the throuble. You cum here to find out if I can help you to get Alley Dooling from the good people,"

"Och, murder!"—was all Andy could gasp forth.

"Aye; I know well what you'd be for sayin', if you could; you'll think it a wondher how I cum by the knowledge; but that's no concern o' yours."

The person addressed here put on a face as if he were going to cry; though perhaps it was only the beginning of an effort to assure his host that, however he might be astounded at this unceremonious rifling of his innermost thoughts, he had no intention to call him to an account for

any thing ; but, before a word could be found to eke out the preface of Andy's face, Sheeum-na-Sheeog abruptly went on.

"Where's the money I'm to get for my helpin' you, and to comfort me for the bad tratement I'll meet in your sarvice?"

Andy, without taking his eyes from the wonderful man, stole his fingers into the profound pocket of his vest, and presented what they hooked up. Sheeum-na-Sheeog took the proffered fee; viewed it a moment; and then, darting at Andy the glance of an old rat, said in a high tone—

"This beggarly skillin won't do; there's a *guineah-beg* * in the t'other pocket, ma bouchal."

Andy caught breath, and jumped on his stool —"Murther, murther, I ax your thousand pardons, over an' over; sure it was never my manin' to put you off wid that;"—the other made no answer, but kept his terrible eyes fixed on the agitated Andy, while he busied himself fumbling for Bridge Chree's present; and which he at last found in the very remote corner of the pocket pointed out, as if it participated his

* Little Guinea—half a guinea.

terrors, and was hiding from the touch of the mysterious sage. As he handed it,

"Ma—" he began, but Sheeum interrupted him with a stamp, and a—"Hah!—be upon your guard, Andy—no cursin' or swearin' here" —and the trembling Andy did acknowledge to himself that he had, irreverently and unconsciously, begun a curse, and would have finished it but for the interruption.

"You war goin' to say, again, you had no design in offerin' me the skillin' instead of this; an' I know that, too, widout your swearin'. But now to the business that brought you here."

The fairy-man retired into the far corner, where the gloom almost hid him, and in a short time returned with a piece of flaming bog-wood, and a bunch of furze, taken from the heap, which having also lit, he again addressed, in a tone of command, our observant friend.

"Stand on your long legs, Andy Awling!"—Andy bounced up;—Now take that noggin' o' clear wather in your hand."

"Iv it war the same thing to you, à-roon-machree, an' iv I had my choice, I'd rather not take id."

"Ho, ho; hold it in your hand, I tell you."

"I'm no way droothy; but behowldin to you as mooch as if I war—" Bridge Chree had particularly enjoined him not to partake of fairy meat or drink.

"Lift the vessel from the ground, I say!"—with a deep frown, and another stamp, said Sheeum.

"Sure you wouldn't have the heart to make me dhrink, when it's hungry I am, if any thing ails me.

"Aye; you have the look iv a hungry fellow, an' you moost get a scrap to ate when we've done—"

"Och," interrupted Andy, "never a morsel 'ill go below my breath 'till I see Clarah agin,—iv its's the will o' God I ever see id—not the big iv a bee's knee—I have a vow."

"Don't stand talkin', there; take up the noggin, or I'll put you in a way that your own mother won't know you if ever you *do* get home;"—and he forced Andy to lay an unwilling hand on the noggin. The blazing furze had by this time burnt into white ashes; of which the conjurer took some, and, together with a dead *Dorch-luchre,* flung it into the noggin; all the time repeating some wonderful words. Having attentively watched the vessel, he continued:

"Ho; all right, Pierce Shea; the fire swims up, bravely."

Taking the noggin from his attendant, he laid it on the table: and, snatching a herb from the shelf, still spoke on.

"This is *canavaun-beg*, pulled before the night-dews rose to the sun, this mornin';" and, when he had again muttered something, he rubbed the herb between his hands.

"Bravely, bravely, still," he exclaimed; and, rising quickly, drained some of the water out of the noggin into a phial.

"And now, Andy Houlohan, all is done that was to be done; take this flask, and this herib, an' listen to my words; afther the first crow o' the cock, to night, let Pierce Shea stand in the glin of Ballyfoile, on the spot where his life was aimed at; let him throw three sprigs o' the *canavaun-beg* against the wind, and Alley Doolin' will be wid him, undher the stars o' the night; and then let him give her what's in this little bottle to dhrink, an' she'll follow him to his father's house: bud tell him—an' be sure you mind my words—tell him he moost be alone in the glin; no livin' thing can be next or near him; or else, woe to Pierce Shea; and woe, a thousand times, to him that's in his

company. Now put on your hat, an' go your ways."

Andy paused a moment, and then ventured to speak.

"Och, may be iv you burnt a bit o' kippin for me, I'd get lave to go wid him?"

"No!" roared Sheeum-na-Sheeog;—"an' moreover, if you attempt the like, the flesh 'ill be withered on your bones."

"I havn't another laffina in the 'varsal world, this moment; bud here's a dacent coat; the ould *caubeen** isn't very bad, bacase it's my Sunday one, an' not the ould one iv all, an' isn't wid me more nor a year; an' my ould brogues is bran new; not six months agone since they war in the brogue-maker's basket; an' sure all put together is well worth another guineah-beg; an' I'll lave 'em wid you, not axin' betther nor to thrapse home amost as bare as I was born; an' I'll make my sware to be here agin to morrow mornin' afore you cum back—"

"Come back from where?"—

"Avoch, that's a question fit for more knowledge nor God gave me; bud iv you get lave for me to go wid Pierce to-morrow night, you

Hat.

shan't be put off wid half a guinea, if I war to rob the altar for id."

"Goh-mock—goh-mock,—go your ways!"—exclaimed the fairy man, in a voice of full command, his eyes flashing, and his brows knitting and knitting as he advanced on Andy, who, gradually receding, unconsciously passed the threshold, and then the door was slapped and barred against him.

CHAPTER XVI.

Bridge Chree took care to be just going out to milk the cows as Andy Awling made his appearance from the hills. Her enquiries as to his success, safety, and adventures, were rapid and incessant. Andy answered, that he had things to tell should make her gape "the full length and breadth of her mouth;" and he forthwith rehearsed every thing that had

befallen him. The frightful omniscience of Sheeum-na-Sheeog: how he knew, beforehand, of his coming, and the business of his visit; how he told him where to find the half guinea; how he dived into the very depths of his thoughts, and, finally, how he, Andy, scarce escaped a fairy-blast at their ominous parting; these matters formed his first budget of communication.

Then, to Bridge's renewed questions, he went over all that related to Pierce Shea and Alley Dooling; and, if Bridge looked frightened before, she now smiled in heart-felt satisfaction. No one had ever heard the like, she said; she was about to despair when first she looked in Andy's face, for it had not any thing like good news in it; but his latter words made her mind easy; all would end well; and he had only to give the herb and the little bottle to master Pierce, and send him off to the glen, at the earliest cock-crow, that blessed night.

Here Andy demurred, however. He suspected, after all, that her nice bit of gold might just as well have been jerked over the moon, or into the bottom of the river; for not a single step should Pierce Shea trudge to Ballyfoile.

"Musha, for what reason?" Bridge asked, in her crossest tone.

He would tell her that. He knew well what kind of a boy master Pierce was; God did not please to give him much sense; he was a hot, scatter-brained fellow, over-bold and hearty:—if he had to do with honest christians, like himself, that a body could hit with an alpeen, no one could blame him for being "fractious" when occasion offered; but, when his business lay among a very different kind of people, the more easy and civil was his speech, the greater his chance of success, and the better for himself. Pierce, heaven help him for an omadhoun! did not mind that theory a bit; and, instead of taking off his hat, and making his scrape, and saying soft words (the way a body would do that had to deal with a hard landlord, that we didn't care the divil had in his pocket all the while), instead of this, why, Pierce would be inclined to use high words, and to call them bad names, in revenge, for keeping Alley so long from him; nay, if they did not yield her up at the first word, who could tell but he might strike at them; and then see what a pretty piece of work we should have of it!

And so, Bridge again asked, he did not intend

to tell master Pierce a word of his morning's journey?

Never a word, then. Since Andy could not go along with his foster-brother, to keep him out of harm's way, on the spot, determined he was to keep him at home, any how.

And, what would Andy say, if Sheeum-na-Sheeog should make a cripple of him, all the days of his life, for disobeying his commands?

No danger of that. If Andy was to assist in taking Alley from the good people, like enough Sheeum might "turn his head wid his face behind him" or put the back part of him before; and then, upon his conscience, he should be a show to look at, sure enough; but, when it would be all the other way; when, in fact, instead of forcing or conjuring her from them, he was to have a hand in keeping her where she was; in leaving among them the comeliest colleen in Leinster county, barring Bridge Chree, who stood before him; why, for such a turn as this, Sheeum-na-Sheeog would be obliged to him, and think well of him, on his friend's account, rather than do him any harm.

Well—Bridge didn't care to cross him, and she saw it was better let Andy have his own way in time. But, considering all the good money

it had cost,—and money does not grow on the bushes in the field—would it not be a pity, a sin, and a shame, to throw away the bottle or the sprigs of *canavaun-beg ?*—So, she asked Andy to give them to her.

"For what to do wid 'em, Bridge, à-roon ?"

Avoch, there was a poor creature of a cousin she had, who was bewitched ; and, sometimes of a night, she stole off with the fairies, and used to be out with them till morning dawn, in spite of herself, as her own lips avowed ; and may be the little bottle and the herb might cure her, and keep her in her bed, for the future.

Like enough, Andy said ; and instantly presented them to Bridge, wishing her luck in her attempt.

But Bridge wanted the bottle and the *canavaun-beg* for another purpose.

Pierce Shea had just arrived from the fair, his mind agitated by the danger of his present situation, and additionally embarrassed that he could not disburthen it, for sympathy or advice, to any one around him. Even from his foster-brother he had disguised the truth of his nocturnal adventure, and the bloody accidents of the following day ; accounting for his absence by a story of a new and still fruitless search

after his mistress and her ravisher. Doran he had seen but once, and then only for a hasty moment, since the White-boy outrage. The warning of the mendicant at the fair led him to apprehend that private informations either were or would be sworn against him; and all his fears and thoughts, experience and reasonings, pointed to Crohoore-na-bilhoge as the informer; how this abhorred and mysterious individual could have come by his evidence still remaining matter for discovery.

While pondering these doubts, as he sat silently gazing at the parlour-fire, Pierce was surprised by a sudden pressure of his foot, from some one who had entered the room without his notice, and who immediately walked to the door. Looking around he perceived Bridge Chree; and he was more and more surprised to observe that, as if to avoid the observation of his mother, who sat knitting in the window, she now winked the crooked eye at him. Of late, Bridge and he had been only passing civil; for, aware as he was of the honourable attachment subsisting between her and his foster-brother, he sedulously avoided any of those little romping civilities that all his mother's maids expected of him,

but that he feared might give Andy uneasiness; and he could not, therefore, but marvel at the pressure and wink of the betrothed Bridge Chree. As his looks followed her through the door for an explanation, she winked again and again, and added an unequivocal motion of her head that was plainly translatable into—"follow me as fast as you can."—His late train of thought now took fire, and believing, with a quick spasm and sinking of the heart, that a tale other than a love tale was to be communicated, he hastily followed her footsteps.

Bridge, still beckoning silence with her hand, led the way through the house and yard to "the haggart;" and there, between two huge stacks of corn, where there was scarce room to push in, and where she judged they were effectually screened from observation, began her story. Pierce heard, with relief and wonder, the whole account of Andy's journey to Sheeum-na-Sheeog, and received from her hand the bottle of charmed water and the sprigs of *canavaun-beg*, accompanied by directions when and where, and how to use them, and for what purpose: after which, with many cautions and prayers to conceal her agency from Andy Awling, Bridge

glided back to her kitchen, and left Pierce to his own reflections and resolves on the strange and unusual occurrence.

Night was fast falling. We do not say that Pierce Shea was entirely free from the shadow of the great cloud of local superstition which since his infancy had hovered over him; and just as far from asserting that he believed a word of the promise of the fairy-man, or of what had been said concerning the power and virtues of the simple drop of water and the withered weed he held in his hands. But, along with the shattered and restless state of mind that, while it deprived him of the power of calm thought or reasoning, enfeebled him also, he had heard, no matter how or from whom, an assurance of meeting, that night, his long-lost and dearly loved mistress, and this imparted a hope, or, at least, an impulse that was irresistible. He resolved, even though it should prove but an act of stupid absurdity, to try the charm that Bridge and the sage of the hills had recommended.—Danger, too, stared him in the face, from the prospect of exposing himself alone, far from human assistance, and in the dead hour of the night, on the very spot where a recent attempt had been made on his life; but the form of

Alley again flitted before his imagination and his hope, and all other considerations vanished; nor would we have the reader think so humbly of Pierce Shea as to suppose mere personal hazard could influence him even in such a mortal debate.

At all events, whether he believed or doubted, or whether or no he once truly debated the subject—which is a doubt to us—Pierce Shea, at the time prescribed, closing on midnight, with only the host of frost-cleared stars witnessing his motions, stood, in the lone and distant glen of Ballyfoile, on the spot where an assassin had once levelled at his heart; flung, separately, the sprigs of *canavaun-beg* in the wind's eye,—and, turning hastily round, as a faint breathing seemed to arise at his back, Alley Dooling was before him.

The figure was at rest, shewing no sign of the motion that must have brought her to the spot, except that her light drapery fluttered, and that her bosom quickly rose and fell, like a chord trembling after it had ceased to sound, or a bird just perching after a frightened flight, with its little plumage yet in disorder. She was pale and thinner than her lover had before seen her, and her eye widened and darkened, in an ex-

pression new and startling to him. Yet, under this change, and only assisted by the weak starlight, Pierce knew his mistress at a glance. His first instinctive action, prompted by wild surprise, with perhaps a dash of supernatural consternation in it, was to start back, uttering a low cry; but the master-passion instantly reassumed its sway; and while the pale girl extended her arms, as if in reproach, they were locked in a lover's embrace, a moment after.

For a considerable time, tears, alone, found their way; and during another pause they could but exchange the words,—"Oh, Alley—oh, Pierce!"—until, relieved by successive showers of weeping, Pierce was the first to speak.

"My heart's darling! My own poor Alley;—how often, and in what despair, I have sought this blessed meeting;—Oh, I had no hope we should ever see each other!—and least of all did I think, after all my days and nights of toil and suffering, the joy was so near me!"

"My beloved Pierce," she sobbed forth, in undisguised tenderness,—"God knows whether or not I wished to see *you;* my poor heart was almost broken with its early sorrows, and you were not near me—you, that poor heart's only remaining comfort!"

"Do not think of the past, Alley; the storm is blown away; and our future lives shall be spent in the sunshine."

"Oh, heaven grant it may be possible!—for, indeed, indeed, the storm was black and bitter; —and has its cloud so surely past away?"—

"It has, it has; my heart bounds to tell you so; and your own, dearest Alley, should confirm the answer:—what do you mean?—I have many things to ask you, and many things to tell —but this is no place—here under the cold night—let me conduct you home."

"*Home*, Pierce!"—and she burst into fresh tears.

"Yes, dear Alley, the home where you will be welcome dearly—where I, and my mother."—

"Your mother!—but mine, Pierce, where is mine!"

"Forget it, my beloved girl—forget it, for the present at least—and come, now—lean on me—come, come."

Alley shewed no sympton of motion, or of willingness to accompany him, and only answered, with her hands spread over her face—"Pierce, Pierce!"

"Well, love?—speak up, dearest Alley; and quickly; this is no place to stay in."

"I cannot—no, no, Pierce, I cannot go with you!"

"Cannot!—and now I recollect—your presence—the wild joy of seeing you—of holding you once more to my heart—this banished all other thoughts, Alley;—but tell me;—who sent or led me here? had Sheeum-na-Sheeog any thing to do with my seeing you?—'tis a foolish question—but had he?"—

"He had, indeed."

"Astonishing!—what am I to understand?—and now you cannot let me be your conductor from this wild glen?"

"Pierce, it is impossible; you and I must still live separate."

"Must! I ask again, Alley, what can you mean? you stand beside me—my arms are round you—you are unaccompanied—free to act—free to make me blest or curst—happy or mad! and yet you say we must part again?"

"I am not free to act, Pierce; and though my heart at last break while I say it—still I do say we must part here—here on the very spot we have met."

"We must not, by heaven! whatever may be your mystery—whoever the agents that control you—spirit or mortal—man or devil—hah:" he

interrupted himself as one horrible recollection darkened his soul.—"Listen to me, Alley, and answer me.—I have a right to ask the question —you left your father's and your mother's house with their bloody murderer!"

"Pierce, Pierce, spare me!" was her only reply, given in a low and shuddering accent.

"If I could—if I dared, I would, Alley!—your heart is not more riven to hear, than mine to speak—but recollect it is Pierce Shea that speaks, and Alley Dooling that hears—how did the villain act towards you? where did he convey you?"

She was silent.

"Do you still live with him, I say?"

"I dare not answer you."

Echoing her words in horror and agony, he untwisted her arms from his neck, held her from him, looked with glaring eyes into her face, and resumed in a hollow broken voice—

"Only one word more, Alley, and answer, or be silent again, as you wish.—Do you refuse to quit him?"

She *was* again silent.

He continued to hold her from him, and to look into her eyes, until the gradually rising passion gurgled and at last shrieked in his

throat, and then, when it had gained its utmost, he let her go, and with arms still extended as he stept backward, exclaimed,

"Stand for yourself, then, woman! We part indeed."

"Pierce, Pierce, do not throw me from you!" she sprung wildly to his neck again.

"No, no! take your hands—your touch—from my neck and me! God, oh God! how am I requited by this girl! by her for whom my heart has lain waste, my peace and life been a wreck and a struggle! whom to embrace once more, pure and innocent, and faithful, was my soul's only hope and effort—and now—now;" the tears interrupted him; "and now she returns to me, a dishonored, worthless, false creature! No, no, Alley," he continued, turning from her; "no, no; free me of your arms—and there—there—stand for yourself, I say."

She sunk on her knees, clasped her hands, and casting her eyes upward, till they were hid in the sockets, and had almost cracked with the straining, appealing effort.

"God, that rules in heaven!" she muttered deeply; "pity and comfort me! give me strength to bear what I must bear—this, the worst of all; and, father—mother—you that are now enjoy-

ing the light of glory, pray to God for your miserable daughter!"

With the last word, the poor girl sank on the earth, her face downward, sobbing as if she craved it to open and give her rest.

An agony so utter and so touching could not fail to smite the lover's heart, amid all its workings of rage and disappointment, with hasty remorse; he reproached himself for having been too cruel and too stern; aud now standing over her, said,

"Alley, dear Alley; dear yet, though lost to me for ever—check this terrible sorrow—rise up—come with me—I—Oh, I do love you still, though we can never be any thing to each other—but come—come to my mother's home and comfort—we will spend our lives to make you happy—save yourself from further woe and infamy—rise and come with me."

He touched her, and she sprang up, exclaiming "No, no, Pierce, come not near me—lay no hand on me—I have now to do an act I could not do were your arms around me."

She retreated from him, clapped her hands loudly, and cried out, "Now! now! Here! here!" and Pierce found himself instantly overpowered—pulled to the earth, in spite of all his

efforts—his hands tied behind his back, and his feet also secured; the rapid work of four strong men, who took him unprepared for their sudden and alarming attack.

"And now, Pierce," said Alley, stooping down and kissing, as he lay on the sward, his avoiding cheek—"farewell! I am going from you; I said we should part on the spot where we had met; may we meet again, and be happier."

"The curse of a betrayed and broken heart come between you and happiness, devil in an angel's shape!" he exclaimed.

"Pierce, I forgive you; may God forgive you!" she turned and disappeared, and he sunk into a horrid lethargy.

The exertions of those who had overpowered him to raise him up, and bear him along on their shoulders, confusedly restored his senses; he became just conscious of being hurried through the glen; but his thoughts never once turned to their probable purpose or destination; Alley Dooling, lost, blasted, base, and treacherous, was all he could comprehend: when—

Thwack, thwack, thwack! came three successive and tremendous blows of Andy Awling's alpeen against the skulls of three of his captors,

and down they fell of course; and down came Pierce Shea, of course, also: the fourth man, as Andy afterwards said, "gave leg-bail, an' cleared off." The deliverer pulled and tugged to loose the fetters of his foster-brother; but, as they were formed of tough leather straps and buckles, it was some time before he succeeded: and when, at last, Pierce was free, and when Andy, as the next pressing consideration, turned to look after the prostrate enemy, they were not visible, a resurrection and a retreat having taken place while he was otherwise occupied. Then he proposed an instant pursuit.

"No, no," groaned Pierce, "they are Alley Dooling's friends; and she is——no matter what—I will go home—to forget her if I can—heaven pity and strengthen me!—I will attend to nothing but my business—nothing; come, Andy; my heart is cold, Andy—cold; come away." He did not afterwards open his lips.

Andy happened to be near the corn-stacks as Pierce and Bridge glided between them; naturally curious, to say the least, he concealed himself, "handy by," and overheard the conference; he knew that, Pierce once in possession of the secret, he could not prevent his visit to the glen; he knew, also, the threatened

danger that awaited himself should he venture to accompany him; but something was to be done. First, then, he sought out Bridge, to scold her heartily; but his recollection of the amiable motive, so flattering to his vanity, that had gravely governed her actions, together with Bridge's unbounded smiles and home arguments, considerably turned away his anger. Next, he watched the live-long night till he saw Pierce set out: and the suspense and misery that followed was not to be borne: he stole out to his "loft," or sleeping apartment, for his alpeen; clutched it, turned it round in his hand, spit on it, and gave a jump and a shout in the dark; and then, fairy-blast or not, cripple or no cripple, stole off to Ballyfoile; watched at some distance, Pierce and Alley; witnessed her treachery; got sense enough, after all, to see he had no fairies to deal with—though, even if he had, his alpeen would not, therefore, be now more quiet; coolly seized his proper time, and rescued his foster-brother.

He rescued him, alas, but for a short time to have him free: and, whatever might have been the unknown fate that awaited Pierce from those into whose hands Alley Dooling had delivered

him, the fate for which he was reserved seemed terrible as any that could befal him.

When he reached his father's home, Pierce threw himself, without undressing, on his bed; his heart wretched, his mind dull and stupified, and not performing with regularity any of its accustomed movements. Sleep came not, yet he might be said, with regard to the functions of waking life, to sleep profoundly; and thus, lying motionless, his eyes shut, and his ears inattentive, he was for some time unconscious of an unusual bustle that, almost since he entered his chamber, had filled the house. At last, however, it reached his senses; and he was about to leap up to inquire into the cause, when his father, pale and shaking, rushed into the room. This sight reduced Pierce to a state of stupor, worse than that from which he had just roused himself; he became indifferent to the voice and action of his father, who questioned him on something, and urged him to do something; *he* talked of Alley Dooling;—and he was seized by the officers of justice. The sheriff of the county, assisted by a military force, arrested him on a well-founded charge of Whiteboyism.

As an electric shock restores feeling to the paralyzed, this announcement brought him to himself. And, as he was led forth, a guarded and marked criminal, and beheld the tearless horror of his father's look, and felt the desperate clinging of his aged mother, while her frantic screams pierced the paternal roof; and as the sobs and wailings of his poor foster-brother, and the universal grief of all around him, rung in his ears—a chill, death-like, by anticipation, closed on Pierce's heart. One poor effort he did make to bear himself like a man; but when, obeying its motion, he clasped and wrung his father's hand, and on his knees begged forgiveness for the culpable disobedience that must now bring him to a felon's death, and bow down that stricken head with sorrow and with shame; when, again and again, he returned the terrible embraces of his shrieking mother; gave back Andy Houlohan's kiss; shook hands, for the last time, with all the weeping household; and with lingering fondness, and in wretched smiles, patted the head of the old faithful mastiff, as he cast a long look to the old hearth that henceforth should never blaze for him, nor be a place of simple and holy recollections to those he left around it;—when, in a

convulsive struggle for resignation, he attempted all this, nature refused to support him; he wept like a child; and the "Mother, mother, do not break my heart!"—"Father, forgive me, and pray for me!"—and the last, last—"God be with you all!"—came from a bosom overflowing in bitterest anguish, and in a voice faint and wailing as that of a cradled infant.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
J. HADDON, PRINTER, CASTLE STREET, FINSBURY.